GENESIS AND DEVELOPMENT OF PLEKHANOV'S THEORY OF KNOWLEDGE

SOVIETICA

VOLUME 55

PUBLICATIONS AND MONOGRAPHS
OF THE INSTITUTE OF EAST-EUROPEAN STUDIES
AT THE UNIVERSITY OF FRIBOURG / SWITZERLAND AND
THE CENTER FOR EAST EUROPE, RUSSIA AND ASIA AT BOSTON COLLEGE AND
THE SEMINAR FOR POLITICAL THEORY AND PHILOSOPHY
AT THE UNIVERSITY OF MUNICH

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GENESIS AND DEVELOPMENT OF PLEKHANOV'S THEORY OF KNOWLEDGE

A Marxist Between Anthropological Materialism and Physiology

SPRINGER SCIENCE+BUSINESS MEDIA, B.V.

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Steila, Daniela, 1959-
Genesis and development of Plekhanov's theory of knowledge : a Marxist between anthropological materialism and physiology / by Daniela Steila.
p. cm. -- (Sovietica ; v. 55)
Includes bibliographical references and index.
ISBN 978-94-010-5456-0 ISBN 978-94-011-3298-5 (eBook)
DOI 10.1007/978-94-011-3298-5
1. Plekhanov, Georgiĭ Valentinovich, 1856-1918--Contributions in theory of knowledge. 2. Knowledge, Theory of--History. I. Title. II. Series: Sovietica (Université de Fribourg. Ost-Europa Institut) ; v. 55.
B4249.P554S73 1991
121'.092--dc20 90-23622

ISBN 978-94-010-5456-0

Printed on acid-free paper

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Originally published by Kluwer Academic Publishers in 1991
Softcover reprint of the hardcover 1st edition 1991
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To my father, Giuseppe Renato Steila.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

First of all, I wish to express the deep gratefulness I feel to Professor Thomas J. Blakeley, who supported the publication of this work, handled its revision, suggested important modifications, and edited a great part of the manuscript, till an untimely death precluded him from seeing the book printed. Without his contribution, this book would have not been possible.

Among the many others to whom I am indebted, I wish particularly to thank: Professor James G. Colbert, who continued Professor Blakeley's work with the same competence and concern, and handled the final publication of my work; Professor Giuliano Gliozzi, for taking up the burden of this work's supervision in its dissertation form; Professors Pietro Rossi, Massimo L. Salvadori, Vittorio Strada, Franco Venturi, Carlo A. Viano, who gave me advice, support and assistance at different stages in my work, who read and criticized my dissertation; Professor Samuel H. Baron, for his most welcome encouragement; Professors Joseph M. Bochenski and Diego Marconi, for suggesting that I submit this manuscript to the Sovietica series; Dr. Irina N. Kurbatova, the staff of *Dom Plekhanova*, and the librarians of the *Biblioteka Akademii Nauk* in Leningrad for their help and co-operation. I am grateful to the *Fondazione Einaudi* for the support of my research.

I am very thankful to numerous friends who helped me during the preparation of the present text. Particularly I would like to thank Laurie Bernstein and Bob Weinberg, for encouragement in the early stage of this work; Gary Marker, for generous help and criticism as my work took on a fuller shape and I was struggling with its translation into English; and Enrico Pasini, for support that was essential in both professional and personal respects. Finally, I would like to mention the profound personal debt which I owe to my parents.

Needless to say, none of the above share any responsibility either for the contents of this work, or for its translation into English.

Daniela Steila

INTRODUCTION

1. One of the most outstanding leaders within Second International Marxism, George Plekhanov has interested Western scholars primarily as a historical and political figure, specifically as the first full-fledged Marxist among the Russian intelligentsia. At the end of the nineteenth century he was the leader in putting Russian progressive culture in touch with Western Marxism, breaking away from Populism and, at the same time, resuming materialistic tradition within Russian progressive thought. Among Russian revolutionaries, a few others to be sure had been interested in Marx before Plekhanov. The translations of some of Marx' works into Russian show this clearly. In 1869 Mikhail Bakunin translated *The Communist Manifesto*. Three years later Nikolaj Daniel'son, a populist, completed the first foreign-language version of the first book of Marx' *Capital* and within six months about a thousand copies had been sold. In the middle of the 1870's, an 'academic' economist, N.I. Ziber, helped to spread Marx' economic ideas by teaching them in Kiev and writing articles in the journal *Slovo*, which to some extent influenced Plekhanov's later choices. But it was Plekhanov who first analyzed the Russian situation as a whole in Marxist terms, thereby earning renown as the "Father of Russian Marxism".[1] His writings became the school for a whole generation of revolutionaries. At the beginning respected and venerated, then rejected and criticized, Plekhanov for long held the leadership of Russian Marxism, as its best-known 'Master'. For years his thought was regarded as true orthodoxy, so that any Russian Marxist had to side with or against it at least until 1905, when harsh political and theoretical criticisms led to Plekhanov's decline.

Studied so far as a revolutionary and political figure, Plekhanov has generally aroused little interest as a philosophical thinker. Although Western commentators have paid attention to his theory of art, regarding it as a 'model' of Marxist sociological esthetics, his dated determinism and his often naive philosophical reflections caused Western scholars to disregard his thought.[2]

Yet, the very reasons that led to a wide historical interest in Plekhanov are sufficient to suggest that a more careful examination of his theoretical activity is in order, since his work as a thinker was always closely connected with contemporary political events and ideological debates. Indeed, the interplay of politics and philosophy may be considered the chief characteristics of his thought. Persuaded that

only 'correct' theory could be translated into successful practice, Plekhanov was one of the few Marxists of his generation who seriously applied himself to the study of the Classics of philosophy. During the debate that raged among Second International Marxists about German revisionism, he was the only one who immediately tackled the 'philosophical' problem of the relationship between materialism and Kantianism. At a time when Marxism was at once extending its influence and simplifying its theory, Plekhanov's forays into speculative philosophy, although often superficial and indefinite, make him an interesting subject of philosophical inquiry.

Although it is generally overlooked in the West, Plekhanov's thought has been studied at length in the Soviet Union. Western readers, though, often find the 'ideological' nature of Soviet studies to be disconcerting since Plekhanov's intellectual reputation has typically depended on waves of condemnation and subsequent rehabilitation rather than serious historical reconstruction. In 1922, a few years after the revolution and after Plekhanov's death, Trotsky declared it was high time to "write a good book" on Plekhanov.[3] A few years later S. Vol'fson and V. Vaganian followed Trotsky's suggestion and published the first, and for a long time the only, monographs about him. These studies are still interesting, but they suffer from their ignorance of numerous documents and materials that became available only later.[4] When the debate between 'Mechanists' and 'Deborinites' broke out in 1925, Plekhanov's 'philosophical inheritance' turned into one of the favourite topics of discussion and polemic, since both parties referred to him as to their own inspirer and main authority.

The new Party Orthodoxy broke off all discussion at the beginning of the Thirties, and in 1931 Stalin himself censured Plekhanov's so-called philosophical errors.[5] In the same year both 'Mechanists' and 'Deborinites' were condemned for having among other things "repeated and extended" Plekhanov's "errors". Once Plekhanov had been disregarded as Lenin's 'teacher' and as the leading Marxist propagandist in Russia, and once his thought had been censured as "heretical", dispassionate study of his ideas became impossible. On the contrary, many former 'Mechanists' or 'Deborinites' tried to redeem themselves and recover their own political credibility by attacking Plekhanov's opinions. Only after Stalin's death was it possible for serious studies on Plekhanov to appear in the Soviet Union again. Thus, on October 16, 1956, the Central Committee of the Communist Party "rehabilitated" Plekhanov, on the occasion of the centenary of his birth. The Committee recalled Lenin's good opinion of Plekhanov as a philosopher and his early revolutionary activity.[6]

A spate of pamphlets, articles and contributions celebrated the Plekhanov centenary all over the Soviet Union. Between 1956 and 1958

his *Selected Philosophical Works* appeared in five volumes, in a much more accurate edition than the preceding *Works*.[7] One commentator attributed the previous historians' faults in criticizing Plekhanov to their adherence to the 'cult of personality', and he expressed the hope that Plekhanov's role in Russian history would receive more serious evaluation.[8] Since then, Plekhanov and his thought have been thoroughly studied and many interesting monographs and articles have been published. Soviet scholars, however, have tried to rehabilitate Plekhanov by making his opinions perforce similar to Lenin's 'truth' rather than by strictly analysing his thought against its historical background.[9]

2. Although Soviet scholars have studied Plekhanov at length, they have disregarded his epistemology,[10] presumedly because Lenin himself was particularly critical of Plekhanov's "theory of hieroglyphics".[11] Only recently a few Soviet commentators paid more serious attention to Plekhanov's theory of knowledge. These reconsiderations, based as they are on contemporary epistemology, have led some Soviet scholars to appreciate Plekhanov's efforts to shed light on the relationship between subject and object. But this 'rehabilitation' has heretofore not led to any full reconsideration of Plekhanov's epistemology, and herein we can clearly see the vicissitudes of political consideration. Prior to 1956 Soviet scholars condemned Plekhanov's theory of knowledge by emphasizing its divergence from the Leninist orthodoxy. In order to rehabilitate it later on, predictably enough, the differences between Plekhanov's and Lenin's epistemological thoughts had to be minimized. Plekhanov's disagreements with Lenin had therefore to be relegated to the realm of mere 'words'. But in the process Plekhanov's originality has been completely obscured. This work aims to steer a different path. It seeks, first of all, to subject Plekhanov's philosophical works to a close and careful reading. Secondly it endeavors to identify the sources of his ideas, and to understand those ideas within their historical context. Such an approach avoids the ideological imperatives of previous works, and, in the process, allows us to see the original features of Plekhanov's theory of knowledge in a clear light.

3. Plekhanov's epistemology is less compelling in and of itself than it is interesting as a reflection of the political and theoretical positions of Plekhanov and his ideological opponents, since his theory developed during the important disputes that animated Russian and international Marxism at the turn of the century. Moreover, by studying Plekhanov's theory of knowledge, since Plekhanov's epistemology combined a deep interest in the physiology of perception (shared by most progressive Russian intellectuals at the end of the century) with his own peculiar

interpretation of the history of materialism, it is possible to identify the specific influences that Russian nineteenth-century culture and materialist thought had on Plekhanov's opinions. Materialism itself became the philosophical basis for a 'scientific' psychology. According to Plekhanov, philosophy and science together led to describe the relationship between subject and object in knowledge as a complex interaction: Spencer's evolutionist *a priori*, which Russian physiologists had already translated into a 'biological' version, gave him the chance to explain knowledge, without reducing the subject to the object, the sensation to the motion, and, consequently, without turning materialistic monism into a philosophy of identity.

Plekhanov found the philosophical premises of his theory in the whole history of materialism up to Marx. Particularly he saw in Feuerbach's and Chernyshevsky's 'anthropological' materialism the most crucial issues of pre-Marxian materialism. Persuaded that this tradition of thought had been the *trait d'union* between Marxian historical materialism and its philosophical roots, Plekhanov ended up by understanding Marx' theory of knowledge in rather 'anthropological' and 'naturalistic' terms: to him 'subject' is more a biological than a historical notion. Although Plekhanov proposed to reject vulgar metaphysical materialism, and to achieve a 'dialectical' concept of the relationship between subject and object, he very often wrote of this 'dialectical' interweaving as if it were just the interaction of two different, separate, and independent terms. This has important consequences on his conception of 'dialectics' itself, as we will see in our Conclusion, after examining Plekhanov's most important readings.

4. In order to understand Plekhanov's epistemology as it grew and related to a peculiar and most interesting historical and cultural milieu, it is necessary to go through both philosophical and scientific references of Plekhanov's thought. The main purpose of this research is to outline the complex interlacing of events and ideas which constitute the historical and cultural background and the theoretical premises of Plekhanov's theory of knowledge.

To this end, the first chapter of the present work outlines the salient features of Plekhanov's theory of knowledge and of its historical background. The second chapter sketches Plekhanov's most important philosophic readings and how they influenced his epistemology. By studying unpublished sources (namely Plekhanov's jottings in his notebooks and the intriguing comments he wrote in the margins of books in his personal collection) it has been possible to trace how he interpreted and adapted previous philosophers' views. It turns out that Plekhanov very often reduced his 'materialistic' theory of knowledge to 'naturalistic', pre-Marxian sensualism, which, in his opinion, had its

support and basis in contemporary psycho-physiology. The third chapter, therefore, aims to demonstrate how Plekhanov's epistemology also had its roots in contemporary sense-organ physiology and in the biological theory of evolution. Finally, from this historical reconstruction are drawn some consequences as regards the meaning Plekhanov attached to the term 'dialectics'.

Aiming basically at reconstructing an interesting part of Plekhanov's thought, the most original characteristic of this work might be found in its attempt at historical exactitude. For a long time Plekhanov's thought has been the subject mainly of 'ideological' studies and it is time to start dealing with it as it is: an original synthesis of Western European and Russian cultural trends, against one of the most compelling and complex of historical backgrounds.

N.B. Abbreviations are explained as introduced or on the first page of the bibliography. The date of the first publication has been given for Plekhanov's own works; the original date has been provided for his letters (see Bibliography B.).

CHAPTER ONE

George Plekhanov's Theory of Knowledge

I. THE FORMATIVE YEARS

A. A Biographical Account

Plekhanov's first reflections on epistemological problems date back to the 1890's. By that time he had already acquired a certain prestige: his writings had deeply influenced the emergent young generation of Russian Marxists and his name was very well-known to social-democratic leaders and to the police of half of Europe.

Although compelled to leave Russia in 1880, Plekhanov never stopped taking part in the Russian revolutionary movement by publishing his writings both illegally and legally, by keeping secretly in touch with Russian revolutionaries, and by working in some social-democratic organizations abroad. During the 1880's, of course, Plekhanov had come to reject his original Populist opinions and espoused Marxism,[1] thereafter creating the first Russian Marxist political organization, the "Emancipation of Labor Group", together with Pavel Aksel'rod, Vera Zasulič, Lev Deutsch and Vasilij Ignatov. After a first difficult period of political isolation, during the 1890's the Group succeeded in getting in touch with the revolutionary movement within Russia. Henceforth Marxism was propagated among Russian youth mainly through Plekhanov's pamphlets and articles. Many years later, Peter Struve wrote:

> At that time (I mean the period 1890-94) the Russian Social-Democratic doctrine, in its main lines, had been firmly laid down in

> the writings of the émigré Social Democrats, namely Paul Axelrod, George Plekhanov, and Vera Zasulich. We greedily swallowed their writings, and they exercised a great influence on us. ... Particularly great had been the influence and charm of Plekhanov's writings ... as the author of *Our Differences*, he played a very great part in laying down the basis of Russian orthodox Marxism.[2]

Among European Social Democrats Plekhanov consolidated his fame by taking part in the international congresses. After the founding Congress of the Second International, which took place in Paris in 1889, Plekhanov was invited to London. There he was able to meet Engels, who already knew of the young Plekhanov both as a writer and as a militant. Talking with his beloved 'master', Plekhanov spent the "happiest days of [his] life". [1893.III.25] He returned to London in 1894, after having been expelled from France, where he had gone five years before after his banishment from Switzerland. Finally, at the end of 1894, he was allowed to return to Geneva, where he was to spendmost of his life, in contact with the lively Russian émigré colonies in Geneva, Bern, and Zurich.

Plekhanov became well-known as a Marxist thinker. His articles very often appeared in *Die Neue Zeit* which had such a large circulation and such a great influence, that it gave him notoriety and prestige much farther afield than Germany. Its chief editor, Kautsky, regarded Plekhanov "as the most important of the younger Marxists."[3]

Among the Social-Democratic leaders of the time, Plekhanov distinguished himself, if not by his originality and insight as a theoretician, at least by his many and varied studies and extensive reading. Following his father's saying: "One must study till death; once dead, one will rest", which he liked to repeat,[4] Plekhanov frequented libraries in any town where he happened to live. Rosalija Markovna, his wife, remembered many years later that, when living in Paris in 1880-1881, Plekhanov not only studied in Paris libraries, but also attended lectures and conferences on anthropology, biology and organic chemistry. [LNP, II, p.201] Throughout his life he read the classics of Marxism and philosophy as well as political pamphlets and essays on sociology, economics, esthetics, and natural sciences. He had learned French as a student, but at the beginning of the 1880's he acquired German in the space of a few months to read Marx and Engels in their original tongue.[5] While wandering around Europe, he also learned to use English with some skill, and, by the end of his life, Plekhanov could read all the principal European languages. During his emigration, he built up his own library; indeed, most of Plekhanov's scarce money was always spent on buying books. Later, when he became well-known, Plekhanov received books directly from publishers and

editorial boards, or as gifts from authors, translators or friends.

Getting acquainted with philosophy, literature, and science meant a great deal to Plekhanov who believed that knowledge was the necessary basis for successful practice. Marxism proved to be the best philosophical and political view just because it could 'scientifically' explain history:

> To discover the laws, under the influence of which the historical development of humanity takes place, means to provide oneself with the possibility of consciously influencing the process of this development; to cease being a powerless plaything of "chance" and to become its master. [1897c, p.425]

In Plekhanov's opinion, as Andrzej Walicki wrote, knowledge was "the condition *sine qua non* of the social release of humanity",[6] since it is knowledge that makes it possible to 'leap' from necessity to freedom. In one of his most 'illuminist' passages, Plekhanov stated:

> Since human reason can triumph over blind necessity only by knowing the latter's own, intrinsic laws, only by having beaten it with the its own forces, the development of knowledge, the development of human consciousness is the greatest and noblest task of a thinking individual. [1895a, p.692]

It is therefore clear why, according to Plekhanov, theoretical activity was indispensable to revolutionary practice.[7] Excluded by force from the latter during his emigration, he more and more keenly devoted himself to the former.

B. The Theory of Hieroglyphics

Plekhanov drew up the general outlines of his theory of knowledge for the first time in the notes to his translation of Engels' *Ludwig Feuerbach*, [1892] particularly in the seventh note. Some scholars have maintained that this note was the first expression of Plekhanov's genuine interest in the theory of knowledge; others have considered it a passing incursion into the epistemological arena. Soviet students of Plekhanov in particular have gone so far as to state that epistemology is a matter of absolutely secondary interest within his philosophy, since most of them share the opinion that Plekhanov's theory of knowledge is the 'weakest point' in his thought.[8] Since Plekhanov, however, ascribed great importance to knowledge, one can soundly come to the opposite conclusion. Along this line, Vittorio Strada argues that

"epistemological ... and ontological problems, closely linked to each other, were central in such a culture [the Russian one], which ... emphasized the objective and scientific character of the doctrine."[9]

It is certainly true that Plekhanov never discussed his theory of knowledge widely or systematically, but that is also true of his philosophy as a whole. He expressed his opinions mostly in 'occasional' works or polemic reviews, during his political and theoretical debates. His whole philosophy is therefore fragmentary and unsystematic. In the seventh note to *Ludwig Feuerbach*, on the contrary, Plekhanov expounded his theory of knowledge quite thoroughly and almost without polemics. Here, sharing Engels' argument against Hume and Kant, Plekhanov upheld the view that external objects are knowable. Against the unknowable thing-in-itself, "that nowadays some German and Russian 'philosophers' willingly expatiate on", [1892, p.500] he maintained Hegel's criticism. It was to Hegel's credit that he had unmasked once and for all the deceptiveness of the noumenon. Whence the thing-in-itself had turned out to be an empty abstraction, that was unknowable by itself; once one had left all the properties of a thing out of consideration, it was absurd even to ask whether one could really know it or not.[10] Transcendental idealists, who actually disregarded the real properties of things, put any determination in our consciousness, outside the thing itself. Paraphrasing Hegel, Plekhanov wrote:

> from this point of view, it depends only on me, on the subject, that a leaf on a tree looks green and not black to me, the sun looks round and not square, sugar tastes sweet and not bitter; and, when a clock strikes *two*, I perceive its strokes successively and not at the same time, neither do I regard the first stroke as the cause of the second, nor as its effect, etc. [1892, p. 500][11]

Plekhanov admitted that color or sound are undeniably subjective and they cannot at all be identified with the material movements which are their objective bases and which excite our sensations. However, there is an exact 'correspondence' between the objective condition of the thing and the sensation we feel when it stimulates our sense organs. In this regard, Plekhanov referred to Ivan Sečenov's words:

> ... to any vibration or transition of sound in intensity, pitch or duration that we can feel, corresponds an absolutely determinate modification of the sound movement in reality. Sound and light as sensations are products of human organization, but the roots of the forms and movements we can see, as well as the roots of the modulations of sound we can hear, lie outside of us in reality. ...

> *whatever the external objects in themselves might be, ... a real resemblance or difference corresponds to the resemblance or difference of signs we can perceive.*[12]

Plekhanov therefore concluded:

> Our sensations are some kind of hieroglyphics that make us aware of what is happening in reality. Hieroglyphics do not resemble the events they communicate, but they are capable of communicating *with absolute accuracy* the events themselves and - what is of prime importance - the relations which exist between them. [1892, p.501]

In other words, the 'truth' of our sensations, and more generally of our knowlege, does not consist in their being a 'mirror image' of things, but in their providing us with undistorted representations of real relations in nature as well as in history. As Plekhanov wrote a few years later:

> In the natural sciences the theory is *true* which exactly grasps the mutual relations of natural phenomena; in history the description is *true* which exactly represents the social relations existing in the described epoch. [1895a, p.671]

In Plekhanov's understanding, the many successes of our practical activity confirm the adequacy of our knowledge. Engels was therefore absolutely right in regarding human practice as a confutation of Kantianism.[13] Later, at the beginning of the century, Plekhanov very clearly showed his unchanged agreement with his 'master'. While summarizing Engels' views in a dialogue between an "Agnostic" and a "Materialist", Plekhanov wrote:

> When we use things conformably to the properties we perceive in them, in the same moment we put our sensible perceptions to a faultless test. If these perceptions were incorrect, then our judgement about the fitness of a given thing (for a certain use) will turn out to be wrong and our attempt to avail ourselves of this thing will end in failure. On the contrary, if we achieve our aim, if we find that the thing actually corresponds to our representation of it, that it plays the role we have intended for it, then this is a positive proof that within those limits our representation of the thing and of its properties corresponds to the existing reality outside us *(mit der ausser uns bestehenden Wirklichkeit)*. ... As far as we know, so far we are never compelled to come to this conclusion: that our scientifically verified perceptions raise in our brain representations

> of the external world, that are by nature different from reality, or that there is an inborn un-correspondence [*nesootvetstve*] *(angeborene Unverträglichkeit)* between the external world and our sensible perceptions of it. [1974c, pp.80-81]

So far, it had not been demonstrated that external objects really exist, but in 1892 Plekhanov did not dwell on this subject. At that stage he believed that sensation by itself was a proof of the existence of objects, since it was possible to explain sensation only as the effect that the action of an external cause excites in sense organs. According to Plekhanov, materialists had always maintained this meaning of the word 'sensation'; for Plekhanov, after all, Kant himself thought as a 'materialist' that the basis of sensation was the action of noumena on us. [1892, pp.477, 501]

So, in 1892 Plekhanov drew up the general outlines of his epistemology, which he maintained constantly through his further terminological changes and theoretical searches. The material object, which exists independently of our consciousness, acts somehow on our sense organs and thereby stimulates sensation. By nature subjective, the latter cannot be exactly like the objective, material movement that excites it. We can therefore perceive the reality just in the peculiar 'translation' that has been provided by our sensory apparatus in its own language. We are, however, sure that

> not only do the basic forms of our thinking fully correspond to the relations which exist among things by themselves, *but that they cannot fail to correspond* to the latter, since otherwise our existence in general would become impossible. [1892, p.502]

In other words:

> since our organization is the product of what exists, we would not be able to foresee the actions of one or another cause; moreover, we would not be able to exist, if there were no exact correlation between what *exists* and what *seems to exist.* [1938a, p.6]

Our perception is a 'hieroglyphic', not a mirror image of the thing itself. To say this, however, is not actually a concession to agnosticism, since the objectivity of the *a priori* forms of our knowledge is assured by their location in our physiological organization. It is therefore clear why Plekhanov referred to Šečenov, who drew similar conclusions from his learned studies on the physiology of the sense organs.

According to Plekhanov, sensation, which is the foundation of our whole knowledge, 'corresponds to' rather than 'reflects' reality. It is not

at all clear whether we have here mere difference of words, or whether the "theory of hieroglyphics" is really opposite to Lenin's orthodox "theory of reflection".[14] First of all, it is necessary to point out that Lenin's "theory of reflection" did not yet exist, when Plekhanov worked out his 'hieroglyphical' conception of knowledge. In Russia one can date the birth of the "theory of reflection" as the orthodox version of Marxist epistemology from 1909, when Lenin's work *Materialism and Empirio-Criticism* came out, and, more generally, from the political and ideological debate around 1905. In 1892 Plekhanov rather thought that his theory of knowledge was just a new version of Marx' and Engels' epistemology in different words.

However, in Plekhanov's choosing such a strange and unusual term as 'hieroglyphic' we may find much more than a casual and arbitrary whim. Plekhanov actually often used the term 'reflection' to mean the relation of ideology to its economic basis or with social psychology as its mediation. As he wrote:

> *The so-called ideologies are just the various reflections in the human minds of this unique and indivisible history* [of the development of productive forces]. [1897d, p.266]

In this case, the choice of the term 'reflection' emphasizes the close connection that Marxism points out between structure and superstructure, in its debate with the idealist point of view on history and culture. The history of thought does not develop by itself, since "human concepts are nothing more than mental reflections of things that surround the human being and of phenomena that happen in front of him". [1890, p.81] However, a real 'reflection' can exist only on the level of concepts, since only mediated knowledge can account for reality in its development, 'reproducing' its range.

By contrast, when the subject perceives something, it enters into relation with an object which appears immediately as a 'thing' and only after further reflection turns out to be a process as well. On the level of sensation it is therefore impossible to regard the subject-object relation as a 'reflection' without running the risk of falling into vulgar materialism, by levelling both subject and object in a confused immediacy. A 'correct' materialist theory of knowledge must, on the contrary, account for the complex mediation between subject and object, which is the sensation itself, neither reducing the second term to thefirst, as idealists have done, nor vice versa, as vulgar materialists have done.

The account of sensation was very ambitious, for in Plekhanov's opinion, sensualism was actually the basis of all materialistic epistemology. He devoted most of his reflections on the problems of knowledge precisely to the effort of working out an adequate,

'dialectical' view of sensation. We might even say that Plekhanov's epistemology is basically a theory of sensation, since he very rarely mentions 'mediated', conceptual or scientific, knowledge. A look at Russian terminology makes this clearer. Conceptual or scientific knowledge should be translated as *znanie*, which means acquired and organized knowledge [*Wissen*], rather than as *poznanie*, which denotes the act of knowing, the knowledge in its process of improvement [*Erkenntnis*]. By giving priority to the theory of sensation, Plekhanov therefore meant the strict sense of the Russian expression *"teorija poznanija"*, since he thought sensation to be the ground of any act of knowledge.

It is certain that in his search Plekhanov moved towards a dialectical view of sensation. This does not mean, however, that he completely achieved it. How much dialectics we can find in Plekhanov's epistemology is still one of the most open and ticklish questions in Plekhanov studies. O.G. Mazaeva correctly singled out two different conceptions of subject and object in Plekhanov's thought: "sometimes he regards the subject as consciousness, and identifies the object with the matter", sometimes he conceives them, according to dialectics, "as correlative categories about which it is possible to talk only by considering their contradictory unity".[15] On the one hand, knowledge results from the more or less reciprocal action of subject and object, both of which nevertheless remain basically 'external' to the action itself; on the other hand knowledge is a real 'mediation' between two terms. If Plekhanov, maybe confusedly but nevertheless undoubtedly, aimed at the latter point of view, in fact his contemporary culture, his reading, the intellectual environment within which he moved, led him to favour the former.

C. 'Human Nature'

What Plekhanov meant by 'subject' often seems to refer more to a biological organism than to the Marxian conception of man as a social being in close interaction with nature inside and outside himself. Plekhanov, however, tried to combine both ideas without rejecting the historical-materialistic point of view and at the same time without losing the 'scientific' legitimacy that he was to take from biology and physiology.

As an attentive, if not insightful, reader of Marx, Plekhanov shared the opinion that man, by changing external nature through his own work, changes himself too.[16] In the mid-1890's he wrote:

> Man is *a toolmaking animal. A tool*[17] is a means of production of

> material life, a weapon in the hard struggle for existence. The more perfect these means become, the more human power over nature increases. But certain relations among people within the social process of production correspond to some given phase in the development of productive forces. The character of these relations determines the whole social structure, which in its turn determines how people perceive, feel, think and act, in one word their *nature*. [1938a, p.5]

At the beginning of his history, man, like any other animal, was certainly immediately influenced by the conditions of his natural environment; but, by adapting himself to it and by changing it at the same time, man progressively lost his original merely physiological needs and was more and more modified by his 'artificial', historical, environment. [1897d, pp.245-247]

On this basis, Plekhanov resolutely denied the belief that eternal and unchangeable 'human nature' exists. He condemned anyone who somehow referred to such a 'nature' as an 'idealist', that is one who tried to explain history and society by availing himself of empty abstractions. According to Plekhanov many philosophers had made this 'mistake': the Enlightenment thinkers referred to an ahistorical and immutable human nature in order to single out "eternal laws", moral and political principles as firm as the physical laws. [1896, pp.53-55] Utopian socialists of different schools always resorted to human nature as the permanent criterion "by which to criticize the existing society and to seek the perfect constitution that society would have to have." [1894b, pp.171] Historians of a completely different political trend, such as Guizot, Mignet, Thierry, who were very attentive to economic interests and class warfare, explained the whole of history by considering 'human nature' as the 'natural' root of property. [1895c, p.23]

For Plekhanov, whoever referred to such a principle could not escape the following basic dilemma: either human nature was immutable, but then it could not account for development in society and history, or it changed, but then it was necessary to find something on which it depended and which could explain its changing. [1897a, p.227] The real solution was the "Copernican revolution" Marx made in the social sciences: no longer does "*human nature by itself explain* historical movement, rather historical movement gives this or that aspect to human nature." [1940, p.163] Whoever still maintained the out-of-date anthropological point of view, ended up by abusing biological or psychological analogies in analysing society, as a conservative like Spencer, or as a utopian, like the subjective sociologist Mikhajlovskij. [1895a, pp.559-560; 1895b, pp.762-763] Neither

psychology nor biology could describe history and society. On the contrary, they needed to be explained themselves, since

> the "*properties*" of a historical human being, his own habits and aspirations, opinions and ideals, likes and dislikes, change according to social development, which is conditioned by causes that are not in the human being, but *outside him.* [1897a, p.227-228]

A correct understanding of the idea of 'social man' could not, however, disregard man's complex relation with biological presuppositions. Plekhanov tackled this problem in the second half of the 1890's, writing on problems of esthetics. During that period so-called "biological materialism" was raising the question of 'human nature' in esthetics, since this theory aimed to explain esthetic taste and sense through the data of the natural sciences. One of its most important exponents, L. E. Obolenskij, summed up its basic principles in the following words:

> There exists a more or less constant law in our nerves and brain, which causes some conditions of lines, colors, sounds to excite our enjoyment and arouse pleasing perturbations (esthetic emotion), others on the contrary excite unpleasant sensations and perturbations (emotion of ugliness).[18]

Therefore the beautiful stood in a peculiar relationship with the constitution and operations of the nervous system. According to this interpretation, which referred, by the way, to Helmholtz's and Wundt's psycho-physiological analysis, it was possible to find different tastes in different individuals, but their differences might be very small: since taste had its roots in the biological structure of the human organism, it had to be considered essentially constant.

Plekhanov probably knew this theory. Although probative documents cannot be found among his manuscripts, some polemical references within the original text and a general chronological coincidence suggest as circumstantial evidence that Plekhanov's 1899-1900 articles on esthetic subjects, known as the *Unaddressed Letters*, were his answer to biological materialism or at least to a restrictive interpretation of it.[19] Plekhanov did not doubt that the esthetic sense had a basic biological presupposition, but he did not think that this fact might be an objection to the general principle of a materialistic view of history. No historical-materialist had ever thought "to deny this or that of the generally known properties of human nature, or to enter upon arbitrary commentaries apropos of this nature". [1899c, p.13] Biological nature simply endowed every human being with the potential

for esthetic tastes and ideas. As Plekhanov wrote:

> *His surrounding circumstances* determine the transition from this *possibility* in *reality*; through these circumstances we can explain the fact that a given social man ... has *precisely these particular* esthetic tastes and ideas, and *not others*. [*loc.cit.*]

On the one hand, therefore, in accordance with historical materialism, the contents and concrete expressions of esthetic activity refer to economic and political history; on the other hand, their 'form' depends on human physiological structure. It is clearly a sort of concession that Plekhanov made to the biological materialism he had been criticizing. How much in this conception comes from Russian nineteenth-century physiology, how much from Feuerbach's and Chernyshevsky's anthropological materialism, it will be possible to define only by examining Plekhanov's cultural references and readings. Here let us comment that not only Western scholars, but also a few - albeit reluctant - Soviet ones, have recognized vestiges of Feuerbach's anthropologism in Plekhanov's esthetics.[20]

Plekhanov put forth his conception of 'human nature' mainly in his esthetic writings, but he thought his ideas also were valid in other areas.[21] Actually he was working toward a general conception of the relationship between the human being, primarily as a biological being, and his social environment: human nature endowed human beings with the potential for tastes, ideas, attitudes, but the fulfillment of these possibilities depended primarily on external social conditions. Human nature was a biological datum; social relations could however influence it and determine its manifestations. Plekhanov wrote:

> Human nature is like the case of a type-setter: the case is given and the type of the letters is given, but how the letters are set depends, not on the case, but on the type- setter. Here social relations play the type-setter's role. [1936, p.156]

Plekhanov therefore combined a historical-materialist conception of the relationship between man and his milieu with a biological idea of the human organism.

According to Plekhanov, the 'form' in which we perceive and know the external world was to be located in our sense organization, in the physiological properties of our organism. But Plekhanov did not mean to make any concession to the ahistorical notion of human nature which he always criticized. For him, the biological nature of the human organism was merely the starting-point of a complex development, conditioned and influenced by the social-historical milieu. Plekhanov

went so far as to imply that material conditions might even transform human nature over several generations. No doubt, Spencerian evolutionary ideas played a vital role in this formulation: the *a priori* properties of the individual organism, those that condition its perception of the external world along with its other vital functions, are *a posteriori* to the species, since they are precisely the stored-up experience of the species itself, fixed and becoming hereditary in the organic structure of the nervous system. On the one hand Plekhanov therefore rejected biological materialism and its reference to the idea of an ahistorical human nature; on the other, however, he assimilated and developed suggestions from the biological theory of evolution.

II. AGAINST REVISIONISM

A. A Biographical Account

At the end of the century Plekhanov again considered epistemological subjects in order to outline clearly his own ideas against the well-known 'revision' of Marxist theoretical premises, which Eduard Bernstein and other German Social Democrats were delineating. Although we are not going to examine the complex relationship between Kantian Socialism and revisionism, both by no means monolithic trends, it has however to be stressed that revisionists generally shared the wide-spread slogan "back to Kant", both in ethics and in the theory of knowledge. While there are many studies on the ethical side of the debate between orthodox Marxists and neo-Kantian revisionists, scholars have much more rarely considered its epistemological side, what Franz Staudinger defined as "the dispute on the thing-in-itself".[22] Here we shall outline the general features of its historical development in order to better understand Plekhanov's position within it. Afterwards we shall examine how the debate influenced Plekhanov's own theory of knowledge.

As of the beginning of 1897, Plekhanov was preparing to write an essay against Konrad Schmidt, a social-democratic economist whose views came close to polemic revisionism, and who had published an article on Plekhanov's last remarkable work: *Beiträge zur Geschichte des Materialismus*.[1896] In this article Schmidt doubted the connection between Marx' historical views and philosophical materialism, which Plekhanov had posited in his *Essays*.[23] At first Plekhanov aimed to conduct a moderate theoretical polemic. Writing to Kautsky about his intention, Plekhanov even doubted that such a

polemic would be especially interesting. [1897.II-III] The publication of Eduard Bernstein's articles on the 'Problems of Socialism', however, persuaded him to attack revisionism more resolutely. To Pavel Aksel'rod, Plekhanov wrote that he "had almost fallen ill, because of those articles". What struck him most in Bernstein's opinions, was that not all of them appeared to be groundless. For instance, Plekhanov agreed with Bernstein that one could not expect a prompt breakdown of capitalism. But, according to Plekhanov, Bernstein was using his analysis to draw wholly "Philistine", bourgeois conclusions. [1898.II.12] Both Plekhanov and Aksel'rod agreed that the most dangerous trait in Bernstein's articles was the author's "*manque de fois* in the progressive movement of the humankind", [1898.II.16] his lack of "enthusiasm for truth".

> Without this passion - Plekhanov concluded - there can be nothing great in history. ... In Bernstein one cannot find this passion; one finds a lot of smug banalities. [1898.II.24][24]

Of course revisionism was bound to seem a dangerous misfortune to one who thought the purity of Marxist doctrine the basic guarantee of its success, as Plekhanov did. This is how he later depicted that crucial situation: "It is a matter of who will bury whom: Bernstein social democracy, or social democracy Bernstein." [1899.III] Plekhanov was ready to devote his extraordinary polemic spirit to the defence of Marxist orthodoxy.[25]

However for a few months tactical considerations kept him from directly interfering in the internal dealings of a foreign party. There were, for example, Pavel Aksel'rod's repeated caveats to be moderate, [1898.II.28] and his own fear that a too lively polemic could badly damage the young Russian social-democratic movement that stood so much in need of its stronger German comrades' support. All these concerns suggested that Plekhanov wait for the SPD to declare its own opinion. Reassuring Aksel'rod on this subject, Plekhanov wrote:

> In this affair I must be extremely careful and tactful. It would be a great error on my part to start playing Bakunin's role, blaming the Western workers' party for backwardness, unrevolutionary character, etc. This role is extremely dishonourable. It is therefore necessary to wait for the Germans themselves to speak. [1898.III]

But German social democracy did not take a definite position. Finally, in May 1898, Plekhanov asked Kautsky to publish his first article against Bernstein. By that time he had developed the firm intention of polemicizing against revisionism without any compromise. He stated:

> I must confess that those philosophers' writings arouse my deep indignation and my reply won't be very kind. But to me these are very important matters and I cannot preserve an academic coolness. The "philosophical ideas" of Messrs. Schmidt and Bernstein are precisely those neo-Kantian ideas, against which my masters have always fought. [1898.V.20]

For his part, Kautsky agreed to publish the article that Plekhanov then hastened to send to him. Plekhanov's 'Bernstein und der Materialismus', [1898b] however, was so fierce, that Kautsky felt compelled to tone done a few "personal attacks". [1898.VI.4] Plekhanov's ill temper was already well-known. Aleksej Voden later remembered that once, in the mid-1890's, he talked with Engels about Plekhanov's discussion with Russian populists, underlining that he was forced to be rude in order to defend himself and Marxism. Hearing that Plekhanov was complaining about his opponents' polemics, Engels, smiling, remarked: "*Quis tulerit Gracchos de seditione querentes*?" and he added in Russian: "Whoever hurts Plekhanov, won't Plekhanov himself hurt anybody?"[26]

Besides Kautsky's interventions against Plekhanov's polemical harshness, the article 'Bernstein und der Materialism' did not appear until July because there were some problems with its translation into German. Kautsky apologized to Plekhanov, writing that he had sought "a good, reliable translator" and he had therefore entrusted Clara Zetkin with the task. But the German elections and the connected activity of political agitation had distracted Zetkin from her 'literary' work. [1898.VII.14] Plekhanov however suspected that this delay really derived from Kautsky's long-standing friendship with Eduard Bernstein. Kautsky himself had confessed he did not feel like directly intervening against Bernstein:

> Since we have struggled together, shoulder to shoulder, most tightly connected for eighteen years, it is by no means easy to take up arms against a former companion. [1898.V.22]

Kautsky however claimed to welcome Plekhanov's article. Since he was Bernstein's friend, he was happy that someone else had relieved him of the task of polemicizing against Bernstein. Kautsky reassured Plekhanov: "My friendship does not go so far as to enable me to look calmly at the distortion of Marxism". [1898.VII.29] It must be noted, however, that Kautsky was not unwilling to reconcile Kant with Marx. On this subject he wrote to Plekhanov:

> I must frankly state that neo-Kantianism bothers me less than anything else. I have never been good in philosophy and, although I wholly stand on the standpoint of dialectical materialism, I, however, think that Marx' and Engels' economic and historical standpoint is compatible with neo-Kantianism as a last resort. [1898.V.22]

And he later added:

> I think that it is possible to be somehow neo-Kantian and to admit the historical and economic teaching of Marxism - neo-Kantian in the sense of some neo-Kantians who admit the thing-in-itself merely as a limit (*Grenzbegriff*) on experience and knowledge, and who admit the critique of knowledge (*Erkenntniskritik*) solely for the purpose of exactly determining these limits. [1901.II.6]

However Kautsky felt about philosophical revisionism, Plekhanov's article was finally published in *Die Neue Zeit*. For a few months Plekhanov waited in vain for his antagonist's reply; finally he returned more vigorously to his first intentions and started work on an article against Konrad Schmidt. By that time Schmidt had become to Plekhanov 'the philosopher of revisionism', since Bernstein himself had declared a debt to him as far as his own theory of knowledge was concerned.[27] In one of his notebooks, Plekhanov wrote: "Schmidt is Bernstein's *doctor irrefragabilis*".[28] Plekhanov's article, 'Konrad Schmidt gegen Karl Marx und Friedrich Engels', appeared at the end of October in *Die Neue Zeit*, translated by Clara Zetkin; [1898c] a few days later Plekhanov's open letter to Karl Kautsky came out in the *Sächsische Arbeiterzeitung*. [1898d] This time Plekhanov had asked the editor, Rosa Luxemburg, to translate his article, but she had rather sharply denied. It was probably with a little malice that she had suggested to apply to Kričevskij, [1898.X.17] who was already siding with 'economism' and was going to enter the editorial staff of the 'revisionist' journal *Rabochee Delo*. It is worth recalling that, although Plekhanov and Rosa occasionally sided together, they were by no means friends.[29] Anyway, Plekhanov's open letter was finally translated by O. M. Polinkovskij, a student member of the 'Union of Russian Social Democrats Abroad' and faithful supporter of Plekhanov's 'Group'. [1898.X.18]

In his message to Kautsky Plekhanov declared that he did not want to interfere with the internal affairs of the German Social Democrats and was merely going to consider the danger that Bernstein's revisionism posed for international socialism. However, he clearly expressed his dissatisfaction with the 'moderate' results of the Stuttgart Congress, at

which Kautsky had made professions of gratitude to Bernstein for having enlived the theoretical debate within social democracy.[30] Plekhanov replied that Bernstein's opinions were of no use at all. German Social Democrats should have expelled him from the Party; only thereby they would have showed themselves wholly consistent with their own profession of Marxism.[1898d, p.372]

Plekhanov was not the only one who attached great meaning to the issues of the Stuttgart Congress. German social democracy was considered as "the faithful standard-bearer of revolutionary thought" [*loc.cit.*] and its congresses had great influences on the whole of international social democratic movement. One moment of the Stuttgart meeting was particularly unpleasant for Plekhanov because of its influence on the internal disagreement of Russian social democracy. During the Congress some delegates had maintained that Bernstein's giving up socialism might be due to his living in England,[31] an analysis that met with the appoval of some of the younger Russian revolutionaries. Soon after the Stuttgart Congress, the first Congress of the "Union of Russian Social Democrats Abroad" convened, during which the opposition between the "young" majority and the "old" group came to an open conflict.[32] Vera Zasulič, who attended the congress of the Union unlike Plekhanov, reported to him:

> when Kautsky said at the [Stuttgart] Congress that Bernstein lost his *Fühlung* with the movement because of his long staying abroad, Grishin [T.M.Kopel'zon] terribly liked it: "One cannot but loose it, if one stays abroad a long time" and stirred his moustaches meaning: "This is about you!" [1898.XI.d]

Although Zasulič's letter reached Plekhanov only after he had written his article, he could easily foresee such an interpretation of the issues of the Stuttgart Congress, and it is not by chance that he dwelled upon this point while writing the second part of his open letter to Kautsky. In Plekhanov's opinion, Bernstein's living abroad had no bearing on in his revisionism since many other Social Democrats had lived abroad, far away from their home-country, and they were still consistent socialists. [1898d, p.370] Needless to say, he counted himself in the latter group.

Plekhanov's intervention against German revisionism elicited a wide rage of responses. August Bebel gave unqualified approval; [1898.X. 30] Wilhelm Liebknecht appreciated Plekhanov's articles on the whole, but he considered disagreements on tactics much more important than "philosophical heresies"; [1898.X.31; 1898.XI.11] Rosa Luxemburg thought that Plekhanov missed the point, because he attended to "problems which are less important to the Party";[33] many German

Social Democrats in Switzerland deemed Plekhanov's polemics against Schmidt too aggressive, since they all had high regard for Schmidt, who at that time was *Privat-Dozent* at the University of Zurich. [1898.XI.a; 1898.XI.b] The Italian Marxist Antonio Labriola, who one year before had highly appreciated Plekhanov's review of his own *Essais sur la conception materialiste de l'histoire*, [1897d] was shocked by Plekhanov's polemical approach. He harshly wrote to Kautsky:

> It is rather funny, that someone like Plekhanov speaks about the newer German philosophy with such a sovereign contempt. I .... bet that Plekhanov does not know a single word of the whole newer German philosophy. ... These people do not understand that, although they are good Marxists, in order to be able to speak about history, philosophy and so on, they have just to *learn* everything from the beginning, like any other man.[34]

But it was especially Plekhanov's rudeness that aroused perplexity. Pavel Aksel'rod himself expressed to Plekhanov's wife, Rosalija Markovna, his doubts about the tactical opportunity of such a harsh "attack". He did not deceive himself, however, that his view could somehow influence Plekhanov's polemics. Knowing very well his old camarade's character, Aksel'rod ironically wrote:

> [my *Bedenken*] will have no effect, or rather they will have an effect, but only a negative one. "Here is one more guy who deserves a literary guillotine, - he will think by himself, - the trouble is that he does not say all that in the press."[1898.XI.c]

Schmidt, the object of Plekhanov's verbal assault, soon joined in the chorus. On December 10, *Die Neue Zeit* published his article, that Plekhanov judged "silly and dishonest". [1898.XII.21][35] It was not easy for Plekhanov to have his reply published since Kautsky wanted to give no more space in his journal to an endless philosophical polemic; moreover, he continually invited Plekhanov to be more moderate. [1898. XII.12; 1898.XII.19; 1899.I.15] Plekhanov finally succeeded in publishing his article in *Die Neue Zeit*, entitled 'Materialismus oder Kantianismus?', [1899a] giving occasion for Konrad Schmidt to reply in a short note: 'Was ist Materialismus?'.[36]

During the following months Plekhanov pursued his attack, convinced that, even if Kautsky was right in saying that his readers were not interested in philosophy, he nevertheless had "*to compel* them to become interested in it". [1898.XII.24] Later he pointed to indifference and ignorance as important factors in Bernstein's 'dangerous' success. [1905a, p.257] At that time, however, after the

publication of Kautsky's articles on the materialist view of history and dialectics,[37] philosophical polemics had less and less place in the Party press.

Plekhanov's last article against Schmidt was rejected by the editorial staffs of both *Vorwärts* and *Sozialistische Monatshefte*. At first Plekhanov had sent it to Karl Liebknecht, since *Die Neue Zeit* was unwilling to continue the philosophical polemic. [1899.IV.14] Liebknecht had promised to publish Plekhanov's article, [1899.III.18] but after reading it he turned it down: "*Vorwärts* cannot publish it without entering a polemic that would keep too much space, which nowadays we cannot give to it". [1899.III.23] He therefore sent Plekhanov's article to another social democratic journal, better disposed towards philosophical subjects.

In his letter to Plekhanov, Liebknecht suggested *Sächsische Arbeiterzeitung* for the job, but he likely sent Plekhanov's article directly to *Sozialistische Monatshefte* [1899.IV.14] since a few other articles about the philosophical polemic were appearing there around that time. In March a critique of Plekhanov's views on the thing-in-itself by Alexis Nedow (A.M.Voden's pseudonym) appeared; and in May and June Chajm Schitlowsky's harsh commentary on Plekhanov's previous articles came out.[38] Joseph Bloch, editor of the journal, therefore proposed that Plekhanov combine his latest response to Konrad Schmidt with his answer to the recent criticisms. [1899.IV.12.b] Suspecting that the whole editorial staff of the *Sozialistische Monatshefte* already sided with his antagonists, however, Plekhanov rejected their offer. He delegated Ljubov' Aksel'rod to argue with Voden and Schitlowsky. [1899.IV. 8; 1899.IV.12.a] She was a devoted follower, whom he considered as "one of our most brilliant literary forces" [1899.XI] and whom he had already introduced to Kautsky as "a person very conversant with philosophy". [1898.IX.16] In a few months Aksel'rod sent a polemical article to the editorial staff of the *Sozialistische Monatshefte*, [1899.V.30] but her work never came out, because - or so she thought - of the revisionist orientation of the journal. [1899.IX] Later she probably tried to publish her article in a Russian review but she was not successful, and the manuscript ultimately got lost. [1900.V-VI] As for Plekhanov's final answer to Konrad Schmidt, it finally appeared a few years later, in Plekhanov's collected articles *A Critique of our Critics*. [1906b] In 1899 Plekhanov submitted a new article to the *Mouvement socialiste*, which would seem to have suited the new round of polemics raised by the publication of Bernstein's new book. But the editor Jean Longuet rejected it as too theoretical. [1899.V.15][39]

By that time, however, Plekhanov's attention was already attracted

to what he considered the spreading of revisionism in Russia. As of April 1899, he wrote to Pavel Aksel'rod: "the struggle against Bernsteinism in Russia is the essential task of the moment". [1899.IV.21] Against German revisionism Plekhanov wrote new pages in his Prefaces to the Russian translations of some important Marxist works: *The Communist Manifesto*, [1900c] and the third printing of The *Development of Socialism from Utopia to Science* by Engels. [1902a] In his Preface to the *Manifesto*, however, Plekhanov stated he intended to consider only the "social philosophy" of Marxism, mentioning in passing his opponents' ignorance in philosophy. [1900c, p.456] In the second Preface Plekhanov wrote in defence of socialism as a science, against Bernstein's last booklet.[40] But there Plekhanov preferred not to dwell upon epistemological problems, rather emphasizing the Marxist conception of history. According to him the scientific character of socialism essentially depended on the materialistic view of history, which maintained that human actions were subjected to historical 'laws' as necessary as the laws of the natural science. [1902a, pp.45-48] Plekhanov's Prefaces against German revisionism are therefore of much less interest to us than the earlier writings, where the theory of knowledge was one of his favorite topics.

B. Against Eduard Bernstein and Jacob Stern

During his polemics against Eduard Bernstein, Plekhanov tried above all to clarify and define 'materialism' from both a historical and a theoretical standpoint. Plekhanov considered that the essence of revisionism was the abandonment of the philosophical foundation of Marxism, which he located in the whole history of materialism from Democritus to contemporary philosophers.Therefore against Eduard Bernstein, Plekhanov addressed a mainly philosophical polemic, unlike most Social Democrats who were more worried about the implications of revisionism upon matters of tactics, politics and economics.[41] On this ground, Plekhanov was induced to undertake deeper research into the history of materialism, paying particular attention to the "basic philosophical question" of the relationship between being and thinking, and to the answer Spinoza had given to this problem.

In his most philosophical article on the 'Problems of Socialism', Bernstein as a 'layman' had relied upon the authority of Konrad Schmidt and Jacob Stern in order to criticize a certain "pure or absolute materialism" that in his opinion was "as spiritualistic as pure or absolute idealism. Both see thinking and being as simply identical, although from different standpoints. In the end the only difference lies in the way they express themselves".[42] Aware of that, contemporary materialists, in

Bernstein's views, had to choose "to come back to Kant".

Replying to Bernstein, Plekhanov sharply and ironically, as usual, suggested that he should rather come back to the study of the history of philosopy. [1898b, p.351] Materialism was never as crude as Bernstein depicted it: by seriously studying La Mettrie's, d'Holbach's or Helvétius' thoughts, one could easily discover that they were not in conflict with contemporary materialists, who, according to Bernstein, spoke "*völlig im Sinne Kants*".[43] If a contemporary like Wilhelm Strecker stated he "*believes*" in atoms, it did not mean that he had embraced Kantianism. French materialists themselves were well aware that man cannot *know* the ultimate essence of things. Engels himself would probably have supported Strecker's opinion. [ibid.pp.349-351][44] For Plekhanov the difference between materialism and Kantianism did not consist in recognizing 'limits' to our knowledge or not, but in the opposition between monism and dualism. While materialism coherently chose one principle to explain the world, Kantianism ended up by admitting 'theological' and spiritualistic moments, thereby giving rise to many contradictions. Along this line, Plekhanov believed that the basic presupposition of a materialistic psychology was to reject the concept of soul as spiritual and distinct from the body. On the contrary Bernstein, embracing Kantianism, was forced to admitt the possibility of such a psychological principle "that acts in the process of thinking together with the mechanical one and acts to a certain degree independently of the latter". [1938g, p.165] In Plekhanov's views, this was perfectly consistent with Bernstein's political projects: "Mr. Bernstein does not want to disturbe the religious superstitions of the contemporary bourgeoisie." [1900c, p.495]

According to Plekhanov the theoretical reason for Bernstein's abandonment of materialistic monism and espousal of Kantian dualism had to be seen in his conception of materialism itself. [1938f, p.160] Bernstein confused the "inclination to a *monistic* explanation of phenomena", which materialism actually shared with idealism, with the identification of being and thinking, which was on the contrary only possible from an idealistic standpoint. [1901b, pp.385-386] For Bernstein, Marx' acceptance of Hegel's dialectic, albeit "turned on its feet", proved that Marx had identified being and thinking, just as Hegel did, since both the thinkers had conceived dialectics as proper to both reality and thought. [1938e, p.129][45] The only difference was that for Marx this identification took place in matter instead of spirit, as Hegel had maintained.

Against this conception Plekhanov emphasized the difference between the acknowledgment that "contradiction is peculiar to objects themselves, not only to our concepts of them" and "the acknowledgment of identity between objects and concepts, being and thinking".

[1938e,p.131] Coming back to his 'theory of correspondence' and developing it further, Plekhanov continued:

> Our concepts of the objects are formed on the basis of a more or less attentive study of the latter. The concept of any given object must contain signs, that correspond to the properties of this object. The more fully its signs correspond to these properties and exhaust them, the more right is the concept. The Idealist, who sees in the concept the basis of any being, will say of course that between objects and their concepts there is no essential difference. But we have the absolute right not to agree with him and to say that where he sees *identity*, as a matter of fact there is only a strict and necessary *correspondence*.[*ibid.* p.130][46]

Jacob Stern's article, to which Bernstein himself had referred, compelled Plekhanov to reflect on the relationship between being and thinking as well. Here Stern had expressed his conviction that the philosophical basis of Marxism was *naturphilosophischer Materialismus*, by which he meant the whole history of materialism, from Democritus to Büchner and Vogt, with its unsustainable metaphysical way of considering matter as absolute. Since the principle that any event is conditioned by and conforms to law was necessary to historical materialism, Stern suggested that Marxists no longer seek its foundation in such a 'naturalistic' materialism, but in Spinoza's monism. Compared with the vulgar levelling of the psychic and the physical, Spinoza's parallelism in fact showed the advantage of explaining the relation between the two 'attributes' without reducing one to the other. Moreover, by taking up Giordano Bruno's views on the general animation of matter, Spinoza could resolve the question of the rise of consciousness in living organisms, without considering it as a "sudden pistol-shot", as the materialists were compelled to do.[47] Finally, Spinoza's parallelism was confirmed by the results of contemporary physiology.[48]

Plekhanov showed himself much more conciliatory towards the proposal "to come back to Spinoza" than he was towards "coming back to Kant". His main objection to Stern was simply that Marxist materialism could not and had not 'to return' to Spinoza, since it was nothing other than a "variant" of Spinozism. [1898b, p.360][49] The whole history of modern materialism in Plekhanov's opinion had been conditioned by Spinoza's philosophy. French eighteenth-century materialists were somehow 'Spinozists', because they shared the principle of the animation of matter; [*ibid.* pp.354-356] Feuerbach was 'Spinozist' as well, since he stated that what subjectively is spiritual, objectively is material, thereby using the scheme of psycho-physical

parallelism. [*ibid.* pp.358-359] To extend his interpretation to the founders of historical materialism as well, Plekhanov wrote about a philosophical conversation he had had with Engels in 1889 (in the presence, incidentally, of Pavel Aksel'rod). Provoked by Plekhanov himself with a question, his 'master' agreed, according to Plekhanov's memories, that "old Spinoza was really right in considering thinking and extension as two attributes of the same substance." [*ibid.* p.360]

Plekhanov's antagonists did not fail to point out that such an argument was actually very weak. Bernstein doubted the reliability of Plekhanov's memory; Chajm Schitlowsky refuted him by comparing his quotation from Engels' rumoured conversation with a few passages from Engels' published works that he found highly inconsistent with Plekhanov's memories; later, Jacob Berman emphasized how easy it was to refer to "friendly talks" in order to support one's own conceptions, when a disproof was impossible. In 1898 Engels was not around to object to Plekhanov's account. As far as Pavel Aksel'rod's reliability as a witness in a philosophical conversation, it is worth reporting Rosa Luxemburg's words: "poor Aksel'rod, who ... does not discern pantheism from Pantaloon and Spinoza from his brother-in-law Kalmansohn".[50] It was however clear to everyone what Plekhanov meant in his article: he thought that materialism did not reduce the psychic to the physical, by identifying them and thereby rejecting their own specificity, as revisionists supposed; materialists, on the contrary, considered thinking as a property of organized matter, thereby securing the same strict 'correspondence' between 'thinking' and 'extension' that Spinoza, as a monistic philosopher, established.

In conclusion, during his discussion with Eduard Bernstein and Jacob Stern, Plekhanov felt compelled to search out more articulate philosophical references for his theory of correspondence. If Spinozism had very probably already influenced Plekhanov in the development of his theory, it is certain that he consciously reflected on his relationship with Spinoza for the first time during his debate with German revisionism.

C. Against Konrad Schmidt

If Spinoza proves to have been Plekhanov's main authority during his polemic against Eduard Bernstein, the debate with Konrad Schmidt compelled him to reflect on Kant. [1898.XII.15] The question of 'correctly' understanding Kantianism and materialism was in fact the main subject of this debate.

It had been Konrad Schmidt who raised the problem in his critical article on Plekhanov's *Beiträge* and in a later review of a book on

Kant.[51] Discussing Plekhanov's work, Schmidt had briefly summarized the terms of the contrast between materialism and Kantianism or, as he preferred to say, idealism.[52] The two conceptions differed from each other essentially in the critique of knowledge, in which materialism had never been interested. Materialism, in fact, was that theory according to which "the external nature, the matter endowed with force" represents the real and primary substance, "by which all life, all consciousness, all spirit is produced".[53] By contrast, idealism proceeded further than common opinions did, because it admitted their validity within the limits of the phenomenal world, while emphasizing the fact that the world of human experience was solely 'phenomenal'. Konrad Schmidt wrote:

> The matter, that we consider as the substance producing thought, is nothing else than something *represented*, that by itself presupposes ... a representing subject.[54]

To insist on this insuperable subjectivity of the phenomenal world, on its unavoidable 'limits', had however no relevant consequences on the natural and social sciences. It was in fact indifferent whether the world, as we know it, is the ultimate reality or just 'appearance': in any case, science would go on searching for those objective laws, which were recognized by both materialism and idealism. Marx and especially Engels were therefore wrong in appealing to the successes of practice in order to refute Kant, as if the latter had refused to acknowledge the validity of natural laws.[55] Schmidt later wrote:

> This reference to the successes of natural sciences may be somehow justified as far as Hume's scepticism is concerned, since he considered the categories of substance and causality as pure mental habits, the validity of which cannot be cogently proved. Since the science of nature in general works with these categories, the certainty of its scientific results and forecasts can be considered as a proof that the categories themselves can be considered as objectively valid concepts, although they may have resulted from the pure habit of the association of ideas. But it is absolutely incomprehensible what the triumphs of natural science have to prove against Kant, who very strongly emphasizes the objective validity of these concepts *within the world of phenomena*.[56]

To appeal to practice could at most avoid, but not solve, philosophical problems: "philosophy may only be confuted by philosophy".[57]

In his critique of Konrad Schmidt Plekhanov involved himself in a serious discussion on philosophical grounds, singling out a basic problem in Kant's thought that Schmidt seemed to have not grasped.

According to Plekhanov it consisted in the concept of 'phenomenon', since its definition was already contradictory in itself. For Kant in fact 'phenomenon' was "*a state of our consciousness, excited by the action of the things-in-themselves on us*". [1898c, p.405][58] Thereby, Kant applied to the things-in-themselves the category of causality, that, as a category, should only have been valid within the phenomenal world. Moreover, by a property of a thing one meant exactly "its capacity for acting on us". [*ibid.* p.407] One had therefore to admit that it is possible to know at least some of the properties of the thing-in-itself, precisely those through which things act on us, 'provoking' phenomena. [*ibid.* pp.407-408]

Behind such a reasoning, designed "to accuse Kant of inconsequence", Konrad Schmidt saw the "tacit presupposition *that Kant, while he writes about the action of the thing-in-itself on us, has thought of it as spatially, temporally and materially determinate*".[59] It was actually true that when the thing excites our sense organs, we know some of its properties, but they are determinate in time and space and are therefore in their turn phenomenal properties, which can tell us nothing about the thing-in-itself. According to Schmidt, to understand these properties and determinations as if they revealed the thing-in-itself, as Plekhanov did, meant to play on words and to introduce an "alien un-logic *(Unlogik)*" into the internal logic of Kant's thought.[60]

Schmidt admitted that Kant laid himself open to misunderstandings "with an occasional ambiguity in his expression", because his use of the word *Ding*, which usually means what is spatial and material, in the expression *Ding an sich* at a first glance may hide the fact that Kant considered noumenon and phenomenon, i.e. *Ding an sich* and spatially-materially determinate *Ding*, as incommensurable. But Kant only made use of the word *Ding* in a metaphorical and analogical sense. His occasional application of the term 'causality' to noumenon had to be understood in the same way. In both cases it was an apparent contradiction, "provoked merely by a oversight in expression and it is therefore much easier to correct".[61] Hence it was wrong to take it for a real contradiction, as Plekhanov did. In this way Schmidt finally reversed the charge of having misunderstood Kant onto his opponent.

Once again in his reply, Plekhanov supported his interpretation of Kantianism by finding authoritative confirmations in the history of philosophy. Several philosophers, such as Jacobi and Schulze, and historians of philosophy, such as Überweg, Zeller, and Erdmann, had in fact emphasized Kant's contradictions in using the word and the category of 'causality' in regard to noumena. [1899a, pp.425-429] For them, as for Plekhanov, it was not just a verbal contradiction. But -

Plekhanov continued - if it was not the result of an unintentional play on words, it was necessary to try to work it out, in order to make Kantian thought itself firmer and better grounded. In the whole history of philosophy Plekhanov singled out two different ways of getting over this contradiction: one led to subjective idealism, the other to materialism. In the first case noumenon was to depend on the subject exactly as the phenomenon did: the whole of reality therefore depended on the I. But this entailed an uneliminable solipsism, because on idealistic grounds "I am forced to admit that all the people who seem to exist outside of my *I*, are *just modifications of my consciousness*". [*ibid.* p.432] Fichte fretted a long time in trying to justify the multiplicity of individuals, but he could give no satisfactory solution. [1938c, pp.50-51] Anyone who gave up Kantianism and went over to subjective idealism got over the original contradiction by further and more seriously contradicting himself. Consequently, according to Plekhanov, nothing remained to be done but to assess the materialist outcome. [1899a, p.433]

First of all, Plekhanov thought it was necessary to define what one means by 'materialism'. Revisionists indeed had a conception of his term that was quite different from Plekhanov's, as the latter had emphasized in Bernstein's case. For Konrad Schmidt materialism was essentially a philosophy of identity:

> even when it aims at the conceptual difference between what is given in our consciousness and what exists in itself, thereby going beyond the limits of naive realism, it deems it can determine "what exists in itself", the "thing-in-itself" by analysing phenomena; because in principle it considers the ultimate result achievable by natural science as the adequate or approximate expression of "what exists in itself", of the ultimate reality.[62]

On the contrary, Plekhanov believed that such a 'metaphysical' yearning to know the ultimate reality had absolutely no connection with materialism. As Plekhanov stated, materialism was just "the theory that aims to explain nature by its own forces" and "looks at nature as at something original with respect to 'spirit'". [1898c, p.418]

Against this definition Schmidt objected that its last part might be understood in just two ways: either it had a 'metaphysical' meaning and therefore said that "the elements of phenomenal nature, rather than appearances, are the immediate reality", thereby confirming Schmidt's interpretation of materialism; or Plekhanov's sentence

> just states that in the *phenomenal world* we must necessarily *think* that the series of phenomena we include in the concept of nature

> and conceive in their connection, are the First, the ground and womb of all the phenomena we include in the concept of spiritual life.[63]

Thereby there would be no more difference between materialism and Kantianism. Schmidt wrote:

> To the extent to which materialism means no more ... than the effort of singling out everywhere causal connections among natural phenomena and the conditioning of spiritual phenomena by corporeal ones, such a "materialism" in no way conflicts with Kant's theoretical philosophy, but it proclaims a target that on the grounds of this philosophy looks absolutely comprehensible and even necessary. The conflict only appears when this would-be "materialism" turns into coherent, i.e. metaphysical, or rather meta-phenomenalist materialism, when it explains the elements of phenomenon as "thing-in-itself".[64]

By contrast, according to Plekhanov "Kantianism is also *meta-phenomenalist* in the sense that it acknowledges *the action of the things- in-themselves on us*". [1899a, p.435] Only Fichte's idealism was coherently phenomenalist, but Kant himself rejected such a development of his thought.[65] Plekhanov continued:

> Of course materialism represents a *meta-phenomenalist* doctrine because it doubts neither the existence of things outside our consciousness, nor their acting on us. But since at the same time it admits that we know the things-in-themselves owing to the impressions which *their action on us provokes*, it has neither the necessity, nor the logical possibility of regarding phenomena as things-in-themselves. In this respect it does not differ at all from Kantianism, in spite of its *meta-phenomenalist* character. The difference between materialism and Kantianism only shows itself later. Once he recognized the things-in-themselves as causes of phenomena, Kant wants to convince us that the *category of causality* has no application to the things-in-themselves. Materialism, that regards the things-in-themselves as the cause of phenomena as well, does not contradict itself. That is all.[*ibid.* pp.435-436]

Far from being a "metaphysics of identity", in Plekhanov's understanding, materialism therefore presents a more coherent version of everything positive in Kantianism. From the latter it consequently also differed in its greater and more coherent awareness of the

objectivity of natural laws. For Kant in fact they would essentially be "laws of our reason", [*ibid.* p.437] valid just for phenomena and not for things-in-themselves. Plekhanov stated that according to materialism as well:

> nature is first of all the whole complex of phenomena. But since things-in-themselves are the necessary condition of phenomena, in other words: since phenomena are evoked by the action of an object on a subject, then we are forced to admit that natural laws have not only *subjective*, but also *objective* significance, i.e. that reciprocal relations of ideas *in the subject* correspond - when one *does not make a mistake* - to reciprocal relations of things *outside him.* [*loc.cit.*]

In order to reject any attempt to bring materialism closer to the "philosophy of identity", Plekhanov once again referred to his theory of correspondence. According to this theory:

> sensations which are called forth in the subject by the action of the object are by no means similar to the latter, neither are they similar to the subject, but nevertheless *to any change in the object corresponds a change in its action upon the subject.* [*ibid.* p.438]

Far from being a "vulgar philosophy of identity", materialism rather represented the way to escape "both the inconsistency of Kantianism and the absurdity of subjective idealism". [loc.cit.]

In reply Schmidt confirmed his position in a short note entitled 'Was ist Materialismus?'. According to Konrad Schmidt, Plekhanov could not actually work out a serious critique, since he merely maintained a confused eclectism: for him the difference between materialism and Kantianism was just that the former thought that "the law of causality must be valid also for the unknown world of 'things-in-themselves'". From this it followed however that "even *the conditions* under which only causality in general is thinkable, precisely space, time, and matter ... should be thought as conditions *valid* for the world of 'things-in-themselves'". But thereby Plekhanov's materialism amounted to precisely a philosophy of identity. Schmidt continued:

> Or maybe Plekhanov does not take seriously the trascendental validity of the causal law that he maintained, he is content with speaking of the causality of the "thing-in-itself" in a metaphorical sense.[66]

In this case however Plekhanov's materialism ceased to exist and changed into an indeterminate eclectism or a confused agnosticism.

Once more Plekhanov escaped Schmidt's *aut-aut* by referring to and further developing his theory of correspondence. It was true that, if things-in-themselves were causes of phenomena, space and time had somehow to be valid also for them, as they were necessary conditions of the 'causal relationship'. But Schmidt was wrong when he went on to deduce that materialism came back to the 'philosophy of identity'. Space and time were really "forms of our consciousness", therefore subjective but Plekhanov emphasized:

> this was already known to Thomas Hobbes and nowadays not a single materialist would deny it. The whole problem is whether certain forms or relations of *things* correspond to these forms of our consciousness. Materialists, of course, can only answer this question affirmatively ... . Our representations of the forms and relations of things are nothing more than *hieroglyphics*, but these hieroglyphics exactly mean those forms and relations and this is enough for us to be able to study the action of things-in-themselves upon us and in our turn to react upon them. [1906b, p.447]

Marx stated in a very well-known passage that "the ideal is nothing other than the material, transferred and translated in the human head".[67] Schmidt considered this passage as a confirmation of his views.[68] On the contrary, Plekhanov thought it had to be read precisely in the sense of the theory of correspondence. He wrote:

> If, in Marx' words, "the ideal is a translation and re-elaboration of the material inside the human head", it is clear that, according to this view, the "material" is not *identical* with the "ideal", because otherwise there would be no need of re-elaborating and translating the latter. [ibid. p.444]

Two sentences, of which each was the translation of the other in two different languages, were not identical with each other, but, if the translation was correct, they had the same meaning.

> Just so, although the "ideal" existing in my head does not resemble the "material" from which it has been "*translated*", it has, however, *the very same sense*, so long as the translation is correct. [*ibid.* p.445]

To sum up the results of this analysis, it is evident that during his debate with Konrad Schmidt, Plekhanov felt compelled to strengthen and further his theory of knowledge necessarily by comparing his own views with Kant's. Upon the complex network of references that

connects Plekhanov's theory of correspondence and Kantianism, however, it will be possible to dwell only after having examined Plekhanov's most meaningful Kantian readings.

D. Russian Opponents in the German Debate: Aleksej Voden and Chajm Schitlowsky

Plekhanov's interventions in the discussion about the philosophical contents of revisionism provoked reaction not only from German party members who were more or less directly involved, but also from a couple of thinkers of Russian origins, who took part in the quarrel by publishing their articles in the German press. The first to come out was an essay by Nedow (Aleksej M. Voden), eloquently entitled 'Plechanow versus Ding an sich'. Its author was a young Russian student with a much stronger inclination for philosophy than for politics. Having read the first book of Marx' *Capital*, he developed a peculiar interest in methodological matters. Later, not by chance, he specialized in the history of logic.[69] His 'theoretical' inclination clearly appeared in his critique of Plekhanov. Far from the latter's polemical harshness, Voden elaborated an 'academic', although slightly ironic, discussion.

First of all, Voden tackled the problem of the real meaning of Plekhanov's things-in-themselves. Were they identical with the *Dingen an sich* Kant dealt with in his *Critique*? Voden's answer was absolutely negative: Plekhanov did not understand Kant's thought, did not know contemporary neo-Kantian interpretations, and ended up by confuting "the creations of his own free imagination" instead of Kant's things-in-themselves.[70] According to Voden, the concept of the thing-in-itself, as a *Grenzbegriff*, played within epistemology the same role that hypothesis played in scientific research. Particularly, it allowed human thought to overcome the difficulties that common sense as well as metaphysics arouse by improperly hypostatizing the substratum of the properties of the things. *Ding an sich* was an absolutely negative concept. Plekhanov was therefore wrong in thinking that Kant "had added the things-in-themselves to the good, real things as the latters' doubles".[71] If that were true, it would have been possible to raise against Kant the same objections that Aristotle raised against Plato's theory of ideas. But things-in-themselves were not at all just a 'double' of the real things; they had indeed an absolutely negative meaning. Voden wrote:

> In this way Kant's things-in-themselves are really knowable, i.e. it is knowable that there is nothing to be known in them. Precisely this pure negativity of the thing-in-itself, if considered from the

> epistemological point of view, is extraordinarily fecund, since it does not allow metaphysics to attach any positive character to the questionable substratum of phenomena, nor to make those creations of a free imagination as valid as scientifical results.[72]

Referring to ancient philosophy, in which he was deeply interested, Voden compared Kant's thing-in-itself with Democritus' concept of vacuum: both of them had no positive characteristic, both of them made possible the movement of atoms or the experience in general. From this function within the theory of knowledge Voden kept distinct the 'ethical' role of noumenon, which he considered as correlative, but different from the thing-in-itself. In Voden's opinion, the concept of noumenon was something positive, valid only within the practical field; therefore, it should not have been confused with the *Grenzbegriff* of the thing-in-itself. From this point of view Voden could easily reproach Plekhanov for wholly misunderstanding the Kantian concept of thing-in-itself, since he seemed to consider the things-in-themselves as something concrete, as the objects of praxis, even as the raw materials of the industrial production.

In order to support his interpretation, Voden referred to Hegel, althought stretching the latter's thought. According to Voden, Hegel had correctly considered Kant's thing-in-itself as a negative concept. On this regard it was therefore wrong to set Hegel against Kant. While Marxist thinkers discussed about the alternative *aut* Hegel, *aut* Kant, Voden suggested to "come back" to both of them.

Although Plekhanov did not consider Voden's critique as more interesting or better grounded than Bernstein's or Schmidt's, it was particularly bitter. Plekhanov felt that Voden had somehow betrayed him, since he had deeply trusted the young student's philosophical talent. Writing to Ljubov' Aksel'rod about Voden's attack, Plekhanov sourly exclaimed: "*Et tu quoque, Brute*!". [1899.IV.8] Plekhanov had met Voden a few years before and had often discussed philosophical matters with him, although Pavel Aksel'rod at the beginning had warned Voden not to embark upon theoretical problems with the old master of Russian Marxism, knowing very well Plekhanov's orthodox strictness and personal authoritarianism.[73] Frequenting Plekhanov's family at the beginning of the 1890's, Voden found encouragement and support from George in his studies, and moral help and medical care from his wife. To Rosalija Markovna, Voden was bound by deep affection and gratitude.[74] Summing up in one phrase the different aspects of Voden's relationship with Plekhanov's family, Pavel Aksel'rod called him "[Plekhanov's] unhealthy philosopher". [1896.II]

Too busy, or too upset, to answer his young antagonist, Plekhanov entrusted Ljubov' Aksel'rod with the task. It was not by chance that

Plekhanov turned to his most faithful follower in order to answer to Voden's 'betrayal'. As Russian students in Switzerland, both linked with the revolutionary movement, Voden and Ljubov' Aksel'rod had met very often in the past. The tenor of their encounters, however, clearly showed the difference between their characters and politics. Later Voden recalled:

> During the summer and fall 1892 I often met L.I. Aksel'rod: she took actively part in the discussions and completed for me an introductory course of politics, thereby revealing her own soundness. When I, having spent my childhood in Klincy, the "Russian Manchester", tried to convince her that I did not need such evidences of the existence in Russia of capitalistic exploitation of factory workers, L.I. was inflexible and did not spare me any of the arguments that at that time were employed with the neophytes.[75]

Intolerant of dogmatism and party discipline, Voden could hardly bear such a strict militant as Ljubov' Aksel'rod, who not by chance was to choose "Orthodox" as her pseudonym. The dogmatic "scholasticism" with which Ljubov' Aksel'rod tried to indoctrinate Voden helped to drive the latter to London, where he met Engels thanks to Plekhanov's introductory letter.[76]

Ljubov' Aksel'rod took the task of aswering Voden seriously, and Plekhanov himself suggested to her a few reflections to be used within her article, although he never referred to Voden's polemics in his own published works. As is known, Aksel'rod's article has been lost, and a few letters between her and Plekhanov upon this matter are missing as well. It is however possible to draw from other letters and a few passages from later works by Ljubov' Aksel'rod the salient features of her (and Plekhanov's) answer to Voden.

It is easy to understand why Plekhanov was particularly shocked by Voden's questionable insistence upon the affinity between Hegel's and Kant's interpretations of the thing-in-itself as a *Grenzbegriff*. Plekhanov himself had referred to Hegel's critique of noumenon, in order to draw exactly opposite issues. He therefore entreated Ljubov's Aksel'rod: "For God's sake, ... take the brilliant old man away from the foul company of weak neo-Kantians".[1899.IV.15] According to Plekhanov there was a very big difference between Hegel and Kant:

> Did Hegel admit the possibility of knowing the things outside of us? Yes, he did. We must keep it in mind, if we do not want to turn him into a Fichtian. But if in Hegel's opinion the world outside of us is *knowable*, then it is impossible to come back to him and to Kant *at the same time*. [*loc.cit.*]

As for the meaning of the *Ding an sich*, Plekhanov thought that his own interpretation was very well grounded in Kant's and in neo-Kantians' works. "According to Riehl, - he wrote - *Ding an sich* is by no means a *Grenzbegriff*, but it is something existing and wholly real". [1899] Following Engels' arguments,[77] Ljubov' Aksel'rod added that the only *Grenzbegriff* one might accept within the materialistic theory of knowledge was "the *permanent remainder of the unknown*" that comes along with the continue development of our knowledge

> Any epoch has therefore its *Grenzbegriffe*. But this *Grenzbegriff has nothing in common* with Kant's and neo-Kantians' *Grenzbegriff*. [1899.IV.15-16]

The Kantian' noumenon was not a just temporary and conditionate negative bound of human knowledge, but the contradictory ground of knowledge itself, since it was and would always be unknowable. According to L. Aksel'rod as well as to Plekhanov, the essential inconsistency of Kantianism resulted from this basic problem:

> Kantianism is an inconsequent materialism, since it retains the thing-in-itself as external object but deprives it of its causality; an inconsequent Fichtism, since it converts the thing-in-itself to a limiting concept but refuses to acknowledge the object as the result of the absolute *I's* activity; an inconsequent Berkeleyism, since it exclusively acknowledges subjective sensations as real but at the same time retains the reality of the external world.[78]

In L. Aksel'rod's opinion, the decisive contradiction of Kantianism was to be seen in Kant's maintaining simultaneously the existence of the things and their being unknowable. The basis of this "mistake" lay in Kant's theory of sensation: "Kant has divided the form of experience from its contents, the object from the conscience", putting the sensation between them, "as an impassable abyss".[79] On the contrary, as a follower of Plekhanov's theory, L. Aksel'rod considered sensation as the reliable link between subject and object. L. Aksel'rod as well as her master, however, rejected the raw identification of sensation and "reflection". On this subject she wrote a clear exposition worth reporting in its entirety:

> Formulating and repeatedly emphasizing the basic principle of materialism, that being determines thought and thought does not determine being, Marx and Engels often expressed this idea saying that our representation of the universe is the reflection of the outer

> process. But while opposing this point of view to the idealistic *Weltanschauung* ..., Marx and Engels do not, indeed, mean the reflection of the objective world in our consciousness, but t*he dependence of the contents of consciousness on the real being and on the development of the objective world that exists outside of us*. ... One thing is the *dependence* of the ideas on the things, another thing is the exact *reflection* of them in our brain, like in a mirror.[80]

Concerning the problem of 'reflection', Plekhanov himself wrote at length in controversy with Chajm Schitlowsky. An authoritative figure among Russian émigrés and within the social-revolutionary party, the latter had studied philosophy and economics at the Universities of Bern and Zurich, graduating in 1892. Because of his familiarity with philosophical problems, Schitlowsky became one of Plekhanov's usual opponents in public discussions.[81]

Schitlowsky's main critique concerned the general character of the debate on revisionism. Instead of grounding the unity of the party on its members' agreement about what to conceive as their ultimate aim and how to reach it, it seemed to Schitlowsky that the party was seeking its unity in the agreement about theoretical problems and abstract *Weltanschauungen*. This situation clearly showed all the analogies between party and church, both of which had their own orthodoxy, their truthful scholiastes, and a gap between the 'letter' and the 'spirit' of their "holy scriptures". In Schitlowsky's opinion, Plekhanov was the strictest representative of the orthodoxy of such a "Marxist church". In Schitlowsky's words:

> [For Plekhanov] The philosophy of nature, the theory of knowledge, the philosophy of history within Marxism are inseparable from scientific socialism and represent the necessary basis of the Social Democratic program. Whoever stands against Marxist philosophy, whoever just understands it differently than [Plekhanov] does, stands against the program and therefore against the working class interest, too. The disagreement with Marxist philosophy of nature or theory of knowledge already means a betrayal of those interests and a surrender to the bourgeoisie.[82]

Schitlowsky, however, maintained that Plekhanov himself had, as a matter of fact, deviated from Marxist materialism, since he espoused "a Spinozist philosophy of nature, grounded on a modern agnostic-realistic theory of knowledge".[83] To know something, indeed, meant to know all its properties. But such objective properties turned out to be wholly inaccessible to our knowledge, which is forced to apprehend only our

representations of the things. Plekhanov's vague defences did not overcome the ultimate unknowability of reality, which he was forced to admit in order to escape vulgar materialism.

Plekhanov did not answer directly this particular critique, since Schitlowsky developed much deeper and harsher objections against Marxism in other articles. Especially interesting for revisionists and orthodox Marxists alike were Schitlowsky's views on the incompatibility of materialism and dialectics.[84]

According to Schitlowsky, it was impossible simultaneously to believe in "natural laws" and to maintain that reality is always contradictory, which was the basic principle of dialectics. In order to know objective reality as it is, one had to avail oneself of the laws of logic, in particular the principle of non-contradiction, which dialectics claims to overcome. Schitlowsky wrote:

> We perceive nature, at least the nature that is accessible to our experience, not according to the laws of dialectics, but according to the laws of *logic*: it does not matter, if we consider those logical laws of thought as forms *a priori* of our mind, as the only glasses through which we can see the world, or if we retain them as "more or less abstract copies" of the real phenomena.[85]

Contradiction could not exist within reality, as the dialectical thinkers maintained; it existed only in our representation of reality.

Such views aroused Bernstein's approval[86] and Plekhanov's criticism. Answering Schitlowsky and Bernstein together, Plekhanov confirmed that, according to the materialistic and dialectical theory of knowledge, "the contradictions within our concepts are nothing other than the reflection, *the translation into the language of thought* of those contradictions which exist within phenomena, as the result of the contradictory nature of the *movement*, which is their common basis". [1905b, p.84] It is not surprising that here Plekhanov used the word 'reflection'. Within rational, dialectical knowledge, which is higher but not separate from intellectual, metaphysical knowledge, [*ibid.* p.81; 1974d, p.95] reality appeared as a whole of processes, not of "things". That did not mean at all that our concepts are identical copies of the objects. Refuting Schitlowsky and Bernstein on this subject, Plekhanov wrote:

> to acknowledge that contradiction is peculiar to the objects themselves, not only to our concepts of them, does not mean to acknowledge the identity between objects and concepts, being and thinking. If we did not assume an essential difference between the properties of the objects and the signs of the concepts, we could not

explain how a concept may combine opposite signs. [1938e, p.131]

The contradictory unity of opposite traits within the concept did not fall into logical non-sense only because those traits were correspondent but not identical with the objective properties, the contradiction of which was worked out as a process in reality. When Plekhanov wrote about mirrorlike reflection of the concept, he reiterated his basic epistemological premises. The concept does not reflect all the different properties of the object, but it reproduces only their changeable and conditioned reciprocal relations. Thereby, dialectics preserves our knowledge from any metaphysical claim of reaching an ultimate and unchangeable reality.

E. Against Russian Revisionism: Peter Struve

While Plekhanov polemicized against German revisionism in the last ten years of the century (thereby carrying on his philosophical reflections), an equally resolute and articulate criticism of Marxism was emerging in Russia. In this period Peter Struve, among others, embraced and propounded Russian revisionism.

Well-known as an economist and publicist, Struve soon became the greatest representative of so-called 'legal Marxism'. Since 1894 he had departed from orthodoxy, although for a time he continued to struggle side by side with revolutionary Social Democrats. In his *Critical Notes*, he had already expressed 'revisionist' opinions, by stating that "*a purely philosophical foundation*" had not yet been given to historical materialism. He therefore often referred to Alois Riehl and Georg Simmel, convinced that it was suitable to include "*philosophical criticism*" in sociology.[87] Riehl's thought in particular had an important role in inducing Struve to reject the populist "subjective method".[88] As he later wrote, however: "the antipopulist character of that first literary attempt had to a considerable extent hidden [my] un-orthodoxy from [my] adversaries".[89] For the time the common aim of criticizing populism united all who somehow related to Marxism. So, for example, during his polemics against Mikhajlovskij, Plekhanov sometimes seemed to defend Struve's work, although his own analysis of populism did not agree with the legal Marxist's version. [1895a, pp.736-737; 1895b, p.764][90]

Revisionism, as a criticism of Marxism and as a proposal for its foundation on a different philosophical basis than historical materialism, was therefore born in Russia much earlier than in Western Europe. In Russia it was also much bolder since legal Marxists were not tied to a strong and organized party, as the German revisionists were. As

Vittorio Strada has noted:

> While Bernstein's revisionism was born within the greatest Social-Democratic Party, that of the Russian "legal Marxists" was simultaneous with the attempt at building the first Social-Democratic Party in Russia.[91]

Moreover, Russian legal Marxists had a much deeper and more articulate philosophical culture than the German revisionists. As a result, they were more autonomous and politically disengaged.

Nevertheless, for a long time, orthodox Marxists, Plekhanov included, did not grasp how deep the differences between them and legal Marxists were. The Russian clandestine movement was naturally heterogeneous; orthodox émigré leaders suffered from a lack of information about what was going on within the ranks of Russian social democracy in their homeland. For a while, even those, such as Lenin, who disliked Struve's critical analysis of populism,[92] ended up by working side by side with 'revisionists'. Thus, in 1895 Struve contributed, with Lenin himself and Plekhanov, to a Marxist collective volume, which was soon destroyed by censorship.[93] He took part, although unofficially, in the Russian Social-democratic delegation at the London International Congress in 1896. Struve himself drew up the manifesto of the Russian Social Democratic Labour Party, by which its existence was proclaimed at its first Congress in 1898.

Concerned with the tactical necessity of maintaining good relations with the Russian Marxist "critics", Plekhanov went so far as to admit a certain philosophical pluralism within Marxism in his first version of a polemical article against Mikhajlovskij. He wrote:

> A neo-Kantian who acknowledges the correctness of the economical and historic-philosophical theories of the author of *Capital*, *within* these limits can be as faithful and consistent disciple of that famous thinker, as any contemporary materialist, i.e. anyone who follows the author of *Capital* in philosophy, too. [1931, p.147]

Although he sided with materialists against neo-Kantians as regards the relationship between thinking and being, Plekhanov concluded:

> However that may be, undoubtedly such a disagreement between materialists and neo-Kantians cannot prevent them from agreeing in their views on the phenomenal world, which includes, of course, also economical and historical phenomena. [*loc.cit.*]

Very soon Plekhanov eliminated such a tolerant admission from a later

version of the same article, that never appeared since the review in which it should have been published, *Novoe slovo*, had closed by then. Soviet scholars often referred to those passages during the 1930's, in order to demonstrate Plekhanov's more or less concealed Kantianism.[94] If one considers Russian political situation and the whole of Plekhanov's views, however, such a tolerance at the end of 1897 appears as a clear sign of Plekhanov's effort not to come into open conflict with legal Marxists in general, and Struve in particular.

What precipitated "the first great ideological controversy within Russian Marxism"[95] was the contemporaneous appearance of economism in Russia and revisionism in Germany. When the clandestine reviews *Rabočaja mysl'* and *Rabočee delo* sided with economism and started to spread moderate and gradualist ideas, legal Marxists declared in their *Načalo* that they agreed with German revisionism.[96] In 1899 Bernstein himself could challenge Plekhanov:

> a great many, if not the most, Russian Social Democrats who work in Russia - among them the editors of the Russian labor review - had resolutely declared in favour of a standpoint very close to mine. Moreover they translated most of my articles into Russian and distributed them in booklet form.[97]

In November 1898 Ljubov' Aksel'rod wrote in alarm to Plekhanov:

> People coming from Petersburg have told me that the youth there has simply gone mad over Kant. A lot of clubs have been formed with the specific aim of studying the *Critique*. I can easily imagine which mess there is in their heads! And it was Struve who started all this. [1898.XI.15]

Plekhanov probably did not share this opinion of the legal Marxists' responsibility. In the spreading of neo-Kantian revisionism and Russian economism he essentially saw a consequence of Bernstein's ideas and their penetration into Russia.[98] If Lenin wondered why "the author of *Beiträge* ... had not expressed his opinions in the Russian literature and had not resolutely declared against neo-Kantianism",[99] he should have sought an answer in Plekhanov's polemics against German revisionism: in attacking it, Plekhanov claimed to be striking at its Russian branches as well. Moreover, by avoiding direct clashes, Plekhanov probably intended to keep the possibility of future alliances open.[100]

Plekhanov however understood Struve's philosophical opinions. In 1899, when Struve published his most revisionist article in the *Archiv*

für soziale Gesetzgebung und Statistik,[101] Plekhanov noted that while many, during the present crisis in Marxism, were giving up their materialist positions, Struve had simply never had any. [1938g, p.163]

A few months later, Plekhanov started writing a series of articles in response to Struve's criticism of "Marxian theory of social development", which had been so radical as to call for a complete rejection of dialectics. Plekhanov's articles probably date back to the end of 1900, [1900.XII.3] but they did not appear until 1901-1902. [1901a, c; 1902c][102] To examine the development of Plekhanov's theory of knowledge, the third article, in which Plekhanov considered Struve's epistemological reflections, deserves particular attention.

Persuaded that epistemological 'monism' was "absolutely necessary", [1895.XI.10] Struve found its best expression in the "philosophy of immanence" that he shared. Since 1897 Struve had maintained a monistic standpoint, stating that "objective is what is compulsory to any normally organized consciousness", and that the difference between subjective and objective was merely "a difference *in degree of reality*".[103] Plekhanov however made up his mind to intervene only after Struve had subjected Marxist dialectics in general and the concept of revolution in particular to radical epistemological criticism.

Struve's critique of dialectics was already known. In the 1890's he had revealed to Aleksej Voden, then a good friend, that "in Marx and Engels the realistic point of view was unfortunately obscured by Hegelian phraseology, but he ... intended to round out this point of view in the more adequate terms of critical philosophy."[104] A few years later, in his *Critical Notes*, Struve criticized the concept of social revolution from the point of view of Riehl's understanding of logic and dialectics. According to Riehl, dialectics had to be rejected as metaphysics, since it violated the logical principle of identity, which was the foundation of the law of causality itself. Relying on the laws of conservation of matter and energy, Riehl deemed that the cause changed into the effect without any loss. On this subject Richard Pipes writes in his well-known biography of Peter Struve:

> Translated into the language of sociology, the principle of identity meant that socialism could never come into being from a negation or denial of capitalism: if it was to be caused by capitalism - (as Marx would have it) then it had to contain it. Struve concluded from this that "socialism owes its existence to capitalism not only in the historic but also in the logical sense: without it, it is a phantom devoid of flesh and blood."[105]

Further developing his criticism, Struve wrote in his later article on

Marx' theory of social development:

> Most Marxists seem to seriously believe that the slogan that a mere quantitative change turns into a new quality, really explains the process of social revolution. Unfortunately it is nothing but a paraphrase of the process through logical categories.[106]

While from the theoretical-political standpoint Struve rejected the view that a revolution, as a radical social change, could be anything else than a continuous process of smaller transformations, from the epistemological standpoint he maintained Kant's "law of the continuity of any modification". In Kant's words:

> any modification is ... only possible through the continuous action of causality ... . There is no difference in the reality of phenomenon, just as there is no difference in the lenght of times. So the new state of reality grows from the first, where it did not exist, through all the infinite gradations of the reality itself, which differ one from the other on the whole less than zero differs from *a*.[107]

Referring to Ziehen's and Sigwart's psycho-physiology, Struve concluded:

> *the continuity of any modification, even of the deepest, is an epistemological and psychological postulate necessary to its intelligibility*. The law of evolution occupies a position analogous to that of causal law: it is a generally valid form in which we must imagine the deep modification of things in order to understand it. The principle of evolution says *nothing* about the contents and causality of the transformation: it just points out the form and this form is: continuity. The ancient principle *natura non facit saltus* must therefore be modified into: *intellectus non patitur saltus*.[108]

The principle of revolution was thereby rejected in the same sphere, where, since Kant, "free will" and "substantiality of soul" had been dismissed: "they are practically very important, but theoretically invalid concepts".[109] The only service that theory could perform for revolution was to demonstrate its possibility not by irreconcilably opposing socialism and capitalism, as orthodox Marxists did, but by identifying what necessarily connected them. Finally, if it was the law of continuity and not the law of contradiction that ruled, the method of science and thinking had to be logic and not dialectic. Struve therefore concluded:

> Against the fashionable conception that describes the rigidity of

> thinking in comparison with "dialectics", i.e. the fluidity of reality, as an uneliminable weak point in the human spirit, it is possible to posit by equal right the conception according to which only rigid thinking with its constant images and concepts can practically and theoretically overcome the "natural anarchy" of "dialectical" reality, i.e. of the world of immediate perceptions. The rigidity of "thinking" constitutes not only its strength, but above all the condition of its possibility; without rigidity there it could be no thought.[110]

Facing such a sharp break with the main philosophical presuppositions of orthodox Marxism, Plekhanov intervened resolutely, though with some delay. In 1902 he wrote:

> Mr. P.Struve very much likes, as we know, to speak about "*epistemology*". It is true that so far he had not thought it necessary (or possible) fully and coherently to summarize his "epistemological" opinions. One may even doubt that he has such complete opinions. But this does not keep him from referring to "epistemology" on all suitable occasions, and - what is much worse - unsuitable ones too. One must not therefore be surprised that epistemological considerations are for him the main weapon in his struggle against "social revolution". [1902c, p.603]

To Struve's epistemological considerations, Plekhanov first devoted a philosophical analysis rejecting Struve's reference to Kant, and then proceeded to a logical refutation.

Struve referred to Kant in order to maintain authoritatively that a new state of reality grows and develops itself through infinite gradations. But, for Plekhanov, Struve succeeded in demonstrating merely that a series of quantitative changes is continuous, a proof which did not imply that qualitative 'leaps' and changes are impossible. One had rather to look for these 'leaps' not in the birth of new states of substance, but in the birth of new relations between different parts of substance. It was here that "quantity turns into quality, a 'gradual change' flows into a 'leap'". [*ibid.* p.608]

Plekhanov maintained, moreover, that on the grounds of the theory of continuity it was only possible to explain changes of state in what already existed, but that it became impossible to explain any genesis or death. Struve's theory of gradual evolution had therefore "the profound flaw of *only allowing for the change of already grown things, but not for the genesis of new ones*". [*ibid.* p.615]

Finally, the theory of gradual evolution could not stand up to even the simplest logical objections. Plekhanov wrote:

> Let us assume that Kant and Struve are right, that a new quantity of reality (A - B) grows through all the lower degrees included between the moments A and B ... and let us take two degrees immediately following each other among those that are between the chosen moments. We wonder how the quantity of reality that balances the difference between these two degrees develops. We can make only two suppositions: 1) it grows *suddenly* or 2) it grows *gradually*. But if it grows *gradually* it means that the quantity itself goes through many intermediate degrees. And this contradicts the conditions of our problem, since we have taken two degrees such as to follow each other *immediately*. There remains therefore only the first supposition, according to which the difference between the chosen degrees grows *suddenly*. But this *suddenly* growing is nothing else than one of the *leaps* that should be impossible. And this means that our intellect *is intolerant not of leaps, but precisely of continuity*. [*ibid.* p.610]

Plekhanov therefore concluded:

> Against *the thesis that there does not exist any leap, but only continuity*, it is fully possible to posit the *antithesis*, according to which in reality *change always happens through leaps, but simply that a series of small leaps quickly following each other forms for us a single "continuous" process*. Of course, a correct theory of knowledge must conciliate this *thesis* and this *antithesis* in a single *synthesis*. [*loc.cit.*]

From the point of view of epistemology, the last statement is most revealing. For Plekhanov, dialectics was, above all, a theory of knowledge which was able to reconcile the continuity and discontinuity of change since it accounted for the contradictory development of reality. At this point he repeated his desire for a real dialectical theory of knowledge, but, as before, he did not fully achieve his aim.

Yet Plekhanov's polemics against Peter Struve on the whole represented a rather limited episode in his activity as a publicist during the revisionist crisis. He kept himself to a rather moderate tone, and he eschewed the harsh personal attacks that had often enlivened his articles against German revisionists. For this reason, Plekhanov has often been accused by the Soviets of not realising Struve's political dangerousness and the bourgeois sociological roots of his emergent liberalism.[111]

Plekhanov addressed very harsh words to Struve only after the latter openly took sides with the Cadets. In 1905, for instance, Plekhanov

wrote about few old articles by Struve:

> Mr. Struve's article is nowadays only interesting in one way: it shows us how high he was in 1896-1897, in spite of all the defects of his thinking and all the gaps in his education in comparison with the level to which he sank with his *Osvobožzdenie*. That man "developed from a monkey" is highly gratifying; but there is nothing sadder than the opposite metamorphosis: from man to "monkey".... [1905b, p.473]

Until then, however, Plekhanov had maintained a moderate position against Struve. Besides his political and theoretical motives for being more cautious than usual, Plekhanov was too busy with the German polemic to engage in a thorough debate with Russian revisionists. While he was attacking Bernstein, Schmidt and the Russian economists, [1900a] he cajolled, and sometimes 'commissioned', Ljubov' Aksel'rod to criticize Russian philosophical revisionism. [1901.II.26] She did so in a couple of articles which Plekhanov urged his collegues-editors to publish in the Social-Democratic theoretical organ *Zarja*. [1901.VI.2; 1901.VI.12; 1901.VII.11][112] At the same time other influential figures within the Russian revolutionary movement, such as Vera Zasulič, helped L. Aksel'rod in her polemic against the Legal Marxists.[113] But Plekhanov preferred to engage himself primarily in the German debate, since, between German and Russian revisionists, he always thought the former were much more dangerous philosophers than the latter.

III. DEBATES AND OTHER DEVELOPMENTS

A. Russian Marxism at the Beginning of the Century

At the beginning of the twentieth century Russian Marxism was at a difficult moment, as the impetus achieved during the last decade of the nineteenth century was weakened. The 1898 Congress, which had been followed by many arrests, had not led to the creation of a real party, and the revolutionary intelligentsia was once more divided by raging ideological controversies.[114] Plekhanov, however, was satisfied with the work done and he was optimistic about future prospects, since in his view, even theoretical disputes were a positive sign. In 1901 he declared:

> Most Russian revolutionaries are under the banner of social democracy. Among them there are disagreements, that make a painful impression, but we must not exaggerate the negative meaning of these disagreements. ... controversies such as ours occur everywhere within social democracy, provoked by the advance of social democracy itself. [1973a, p.65]

Actually, Plekhanov could look at the brief history of Russian social democracy with legitimate pride: no doubt he had helped Marxism to spread among Russia's revolutionary youth more than anyone else.

At that time Plekhanov enjoyed an unprecedented reputation and authority. As stated by Baron: "to progressive Russians, Plekhanov had become a living monument".[115] Young Russians travelling through Europe, very often went 'on a pilgrimage' to see Plekhanov, as they had once gone to visit Herzen or Lavrov.[116] The twenty-fifth anniversary of his revolutionary activity was celebrated by Russian émigrés in Bern, Paris, Zurich, Geneva, and Berlin.[117] On that occasion he was congratulated by hundreds of people, who called him "master". [1901.XII.19.a,b,c,d] Social Democrats attending a meeting in Zurich declared: "we honour in him the founder, the theoretical standard-bearer and the indefatigable champion of Russian social democracy". [1901.XII.19.c] Plekhanov's prestige seemed to be unassailable, and his appointment as president by acclamation at the Second Party Congress was a consequence and a confirmation of his situation.

But while Plekhanov was unquestionably recognized as the 'master' of Russian social democracy, Lenin was becoming its 'leader'.[118] Closer to the revolutionary movement within the homeland, more attentive to its problems and more original in looking for solutions, Lenin had revealed a firm political authority since the beginning of the century. Like most of Russia's revolutionary youth, he also felt a deep veneration for Plekhanov; he was, as he wrote, "in love" with Plekhanov. But he, like many of his contemporaries, had grown disappointed with his beloved 'master's' arrogant manner. Lenin wrote on this subject:

> Never, never in my life had I felt such a sincere esteem and respect, such a *veneration* towards a man; never had I behaved so "humbly", nor ever was I so rudely rebuffed.[119]

Plekhanov was at heart distrustful and suspicious and had an insatiable need of respect for his authority and leadership. His manners were, by all accounts, insufferably rude, and all these traits alienated more than one follower or friend.[120]

In the case of Lenin, his juvenile love of Plekhanov evolved into a

difficult and tumultuous cooperation.[121] On the one hand, he went on thinking that Plekhanov was "the greatest philosopher" in Marxism;[122] on the other hand, historical and political circumstances led Lenin farther and farther away from his old master's strict orthodoxy. By the beginning of the twentieth century he was making his own, original plans in tactics and organization.

In response to Lenin's proposals during the Second Congress, Plekhanov first of all engaged himself to dispel the ghost of a schism. He therefore tried to set himself above the parties and to tone down Lenin's most extreme opinions. Plekhanov probably did not intervene against Lenin until later because he feared provoking a schism, rather than because he had at the beginning undervalued the danger that Lenin's proposals about organization represented, as he later declared. [1904b, pp.135-140] In November 1903, Plekhanov warned Lenin that "consistent Marxists cannot be ... *Utopians* of centralism". But he also emphasized:

> We are obliged to avoid everything that could provoke new *splits* within our milieu. We had too many splits, and they caused us too much harm. Now we must protect *unity* with all our might. [1903, p.9]

However, little by little, the feared spectre of subjectivism and voluntarism showed itself behind Lenin's proposals on organization, and it became more and more difficult for Plekhanov to maintain a middle and almost pro-Bolshevik position.[123] Between 1903 and 1904, Plekhanov made a real *volte-face*, and within a few months he was accusing Lenin of Blanquism and Bonapartism. [1904a, pp.91-92] Moreover, Plekhanov regarded Lenin's view on the relations between workers and intellectuals within the Party as a particular application of a mistaken subjective conception of the relationship between being and thinking. For Lenin, it was up to the latter to act on the former from the outside, in order to guarantee that it changes. [1904b, pp.125-128] By criticizing Lenin, Plekhanov came closer to the Mensheviks, but he never wholly shared their positions. In 1905 Plekhanov clearly stated his opinion about both factions' political plans in a very interesting article, meaningfully entitled: 'Brothers Quarreling with Each Other'. There he wrote:

> The "Bolsheviks" under the name of party have created an organization of conspirators, about which I shall say as Hegel said on the Constitution of Würtemberg: "after all, everything there centers around one man, who *ex providentia majorum* unites in himself all the power". ... On the other hand, the so called

> *Mensheviks* at their conference gave full play to their boundless striving for decentralization. They partly remind one of that fairy-tale frog-Tsarevna which, when Tsarevich Ivan needed festive clothes sewn for next morning, took expensive material, cut it up into small pieces and threw it out of the window, after having calmly said: "Tomorrow morning everything will be ready". The tale affirms that next morning quite ready clothes really flew in through the window. I do not know whether this miracle will happen with the "Mensheviks"; I am afraid it won't, because nowadays miracles are rare, and frogs just croak and no longer have magic powers. Our Tsarevich Ivans so hostile to centralism may find themselves without any clothes at all. But the first half of the business is done anyway: the material has been cut into pieces and thrown out into the street. The Mensheviks' organization has now achieved the decentralized state, that is proper to foggy masses. [1905d, pp. 317-318][124]

Being at variance with both Bolsheviks and Mensheviks on matters of organization, Plekhanov thought his main task was to achieve the reunification of the Party or at least to make unification easier. When controversies broke out within the Party, Plekhanov suggested the following approach to Ljubov' Aksel'rod:

> You belong neither to the majority, nor to the minority and you are ready to work for any faction as far as it fights against tsarism and capitalism, and not against the other faction. [1905.VI.7]

In the same period, when the Party was breaking up because of internal disagreements on matters of policy and organization, a few Marxists started discussing the philosophical grounds of their doctrine, thereby laying the foundation of the debate which broke out in Russian Marxism soon after the Revolution of 1905. At the very end of the nineteenth century, a general revival in philosophical research took place in Russia, which compelled the Marxists to confront contemporary Western-European philosophical schools and the 'challenges' of the latest scientific research in mathematics, geometry, physics. Thus began the epoch that Aleksandr Bogdanov defined later, not without emphasis, as that

> of the great and extraordinary revolution in the world of scientific knowledge, when scientific laws that looked the steadiest and most universal wobble and fall, giving way to amazing new forms and opening unexpected and incommensurable perspectives.[125]

Nineteenth-century positivism, which until then had met with great success among Russian progressives, found itself in a serious impasse to which Mach's and Avenarius' empirio-criticism seemed to offer a solution.[126] Important naturalists and philosophers soon embraced this theory and became its interpreters and propagators. In 1898, for example, Mikhail Filippov delivered a talk to the Philosophical Society, presenting the basic principles of Avenarius' concept of pure experience. Vladimir Lesevič, a well-known populist thinker, first referred to empirio-criticism at the end of the 1870's and soon became its most original exponent in Russia, moving many young revolutionaries to study Avenarius' and Mach's works.[127]

Faced with new and more difficult philosophical problems, many young Marxists found their 'orthodox' theory lacking in a theoretical and especially epistemological apparatus.[128] The revolution in progress within the world of scientific knowledge left orthodoxy behind: Plekhanov, its greatest representative, kept on using concepts such as 'matter', 'thing', and 'nature' in the sense of eighteenth-century physics, without coming to grips with contemporary natural science.[129] At this very time many young Marxists were reexamining their epistemological assumptions, taking an interest not only in empirio-criticism, but also in Ostwald's energeticism or the ideas of Hertz and Poincaré.[130] As a consequence, many different theories appeared. Although they can hardly be covered by an inclusive definition or ever called a 'school', they have usually gone under the common name of 'Machism'. This 'label' owes its fortune mostly to its being extensively used by Lenin in *Materialism and Empirio-Criticism.*[131] Actually to any 'critic' of orthodox Marxism, 'Machism' became, as Juškevič wrote,

> synonymous with the spirit of criticism, with the aspiration to keep pace with science. ... a banner, raised in the ranks of the Marxists in the name of free philosophical research.[132]

It is not surprising therefore that during their polemic against the 'Machists' Plekhanov and Lenin grouped together original thinkers, often very different from each other. Aleksandr Bogdanov himself, whom they considered as the champion of Machism, did not actually share Mach's thought as a whole. Accounting for the link between his own theory and Mach's, he declared:

> I cannot consider myself "Machist" in philosophy. In my general philosophical conception I took from Mach just one thing: the representation of the neutrality of elements of experience as regards the distinction between "the physical" and "the psychic", the idea of

> the dependence of these characteristics just on the *connection* of experience.[133]

In 1904 however he gave an explanation for the success of Machism within the Russian Marxist intelligentsia:

> Empirio-criticism is the contemporary form of positivism, which developed out of the newest methods of natural science on one hand, of the newest forms of philosophical criticism on the other.[134]

And later, answering the question "What can a Russian reader seek in Ernst Mach?", he added:

> if a philosopher's thought is really equal to his contemporaneous natural science, then he can give us satisfactory *generally philosophical* conceptions, that do not meet with contradictions in other realms of human experience as well, but, on the contrary, prove to be cognitively useful.

Bogdanov therefore concluded that:

> *Mach's* works nowadays are an absolutely necessary school for anyone, who aims at drawing up a really scientific, critically thought out *Weltanschauung*.[135]

It is not strange that in order to criticize orthodoxy, Machists turned on Plekhanov especially. In reconstructing the recent philosophical debates, Pavel Juškevič reflected in 1909 that it could not have been otherwise. Plekhanov's views on Marxist philosophy had already become traditional. The average Marxist saw in him the incarnation of orthodoxy itself because of his violent attacks on any kind of revisionist.[136] Criticism, thus, had to emancipate itself from this historical 'Father'. As a consequence, the hitherto unquestioned 'master' of Russian Marxism found himself attacked and criticized by many exponents of the younger generation who, in the name of the liberty of philosophical research, aimed at escaping the schemata of orthodoxy.

For his part Plekhanov considered Machism a new form of revisionism, which had easily taken root among the Russian Social Democrats because of their chronic philosophical ignorance. [1905a, pp.256-260] Lenin was considered to suffer from this ignorance too, since he surrounded himself with 'Machists' and 'critics of Marx'. On this subject Plekhanov wrote in 1905:

> I know very well that the literary group *Vperëd* is not made up *only of "critics"* of Marx. I know very well that at the center of that group there was Lenin, to whom Mach and Avenarius are actually alien "subjects". But to him all the other philosophical "subjects" are alien as well, because about philosophy he has always been absolutely careless. As regards this there is therefore no reason to consider him. This, in the first place. In the second - how can we know? - may be even the Marxist Lenin himself started little by little falling under the influence of the *Machists* surrounding him. As far as I am concerned, I shall confess that I - according to the French proverb: *ce sont les enfants des autres qui gâtent les nôtres* - have explained to myself the numerous blunders of the papers *Vperëd* and *Proletarij* precisely by Lenin's being badly influenced by the "critics of Marx" who gathered around him. [1905c, pp.274-275]

In one of his notebooks, we read in Plekhanov's handwriting: "Bogdanov is the theoretician of Bolshevism, Lenin its profligate".[137] Considering Machism as the theory of Bolshevism, Plekhanov engaged for few years in a factious polemic against Bolsheviks as revisionists both in theory and in political tactics. For Plekhanov's reply on a philosophical level, his critics had to wait until the post-revolution debate, by which time, Plekhanov had studied his classics; and he had modified his theory in precisely that onto-epistemological area which was being especially criticized.

B. Giving up Hieroglyphics

In 1905 a second edition of Engels' *Ludwig Feuerbach* translated by Plekhanov came out. In revising it for publication, Plekhanov modified the most systematic exposition of his epistemology in his notes to Engels' work. Although he remained faithful to his theory of correspondence, Plekhanov now changed its terms, rejecting hieroglyphics as a harmful lack of precision. [1905b, p.481]

In 1892, according to Sečenov, Plekhanov had considered the impressions aroused in us by external objects as 'conventional signs', different from the objects themselves, but corresponding to them and to their reciprocal relations. Ten years later, Plekhanov decided to correct this conception, since the idea of 'conventional' hieroglyphics could lead to serious misunderstandings. He wrote in 1905:

> When [Sečenov] assumes that our impressions are only conventional signs of things-in-themselves, then he seems to admit

> that things-in-themselves have an "appearance" *(vid)* unknown to us, inaccessible to our consciousness. But such an "appearance" is precisely the result of the action of things-in-themselves upon us; *besides this action they have no "appearance" at all.* Therefore to oppose their "appearance" - as it exists in our consciousness - to the "appearance" - as they supposedly have in reality - means to fail to grasp the concept which is connected with the word: appearance. [*ibid.* p.480]

Plekhanov did not aim to reject Sečenov's views, which he still wholly shared, [1908d, p.242] but merely to change his terminology, in order to better define the relationship between the thing-in-itself and our representations of it. To define this relationship through the concept of hieroglyphic, as he had before, now seemed to be inadequate: this definition did not emphasize sufficiently the radical difference between the thing-in-itself and its representation, and thereby might be interpreted as if it made a hypothetical 'appearance' of the thing-in-itself to correspond to our sensory impressions. As Plekhanov later wrote:

> if the thing-in-itself has a color only when one looks at it, an odor only when one smells it, and so on, then by calling conventional signs our representations of it, we give others cause to think that in our opinion a sort of color-in-itself, odor-in-itself, etc. correspond to the color, odor, etc. as they exist in our sensations - in short, a sort of *sensations-in-themselves*, that cannot become the object of *our sensations*.[*ibid.* pp.241-242][138]

In fact the theory of hieroglyphics ended up by supposing for any 'sign' the existence of a precise 'meaning', of something within the thing-in-itself to which the 'sign' was strictly analogous, if not similar. According to Plekhanov, on the contrary, something absolutely different and unknowable corresponded to the 'appearance' *(vid)* of the thing as it appears to us through our sensations. The way the thing looks in our sight is something 'subjective', since it depends on the subject's sense organs' characteristics. Not by chance, while revising his notes for the second edition of *Ludwig Feuerbach*, Plekhanov added a few references of a physiological and biological character. [1905b, pp.480-483] In particular, he argued as follows: if we consider as subjects "all the organisms that, thanks to certain peculiarities of their structure, have the possibility of 'seeing' *(videt')* the external world in one way or another", [*ibid.* p.481][139] we must infer that not all the subjects have an identical constitution. Therefore, according to Plekhanov, "the external world also has not for them an identical 'appearance' *(vid)*". [*loc.cit.*]

From that it would be possible to conclude that the new version of Plekhanov's theory of correspondence was clearly subjectivist, more than it had been in his earlier exposition. Plekhanov was however anxious to reject such an understanding of his theory, by more precisely defining the subjective 'appearance' or 'phenomenon' in its relationship with 'objective' concepts such as 'property' and 'form'.

In order to differentiate between 'appearance' and 'property', Plekhanov wrote:

> By saying that the "appearance" of a thing is merely the result of its action on us, I meant the properties of the thing as they *reverberate in the subject's representation* (*im subjektiven Sinne aufgefasst*, Hegel would have said, or, in order to use Marx' language, it would be necessary to say: as they exist in their translation into the language of human consciousness); but, in expressing this idea, I did not at all intend to affirm that the properties of things exist only in our representation. [1908d, p.246][140]

Simply:

> By acting on us, the thing-in-itself excites in us a series of sensations, on the grounds of which we form our representation of the thing. Once this representation appears, the existence of the thing doubles: it exists firstly in itself, secondly in our representation. [*loc.cit.*]

Hence objective 'properties' corresponded to the 'qualities' the thing showed in one's representations, to its 'appearance', and this correspondence once again guaranteed the validity and objectivity of our knowledge. Plekhanov wrote:

> If a man and a snail move from point *A* to point *B*, then both for the man and for the snail the straight line will be the shortest distance between those two points: if both these organisms went along a broken line, *they would have to expend a greater amount of labor for their advance*. Therefore, *the properties of space* have *also an objective significance*, although they are represented in different ways by organisms at different stages of development. [1905b, p.481]

A property is something objective, a moment in the thing-in-itself and therefore it is necessarily unknowable. Nevertheless, Plekhanov devoted much effort to the clarification of the precise meaning of this word. In particular, he extended his knowledge of Hegel's philosophy

dwelling precisely upon the passages about the concept of 'property'.[141] On this subject Hegel had written:

> A thing has *properties*. These are *firstly* its determined relations with *something else* ... . But, *secondly*, in this being set the thing is *in itself* ... . A thing has the property of producing this or that in something else, and of expressing itself in its relation in its own peculiar way.[142]

It is not surprising that Plekhanov enthusiastically quoted this passage, praising its author as a "brilliant old man" [1908d, p.245] since in 1898 Plekhanov himself had defined the property as "the faculty of the thing for acting *mediately* or *immediately* on us". [1898c, p.407] The property is permanent and objective, unlike the 'appearance', i.e. the 'quality' subjectively perceived: if it is true that "the thing-in-itself has a color only when one looks at it, an odor only when one smells it", etc., its faculty for exciting a sensation in our sight or our olfaction persists even when nobody looks at or smells it. It is therefore a property of the thing-in-itself, independent of the subject. [1908d, p.245]

Urged on by a few of Bogdanov's polemic remarks, Plekhanov likewise distinguished between the appearance and the form of the thing. Bogdanov thought he had found a sharp contradiction within Plekhanov's views that, on the one hand, had maintained that "t*o the forms and reciprocal relations* [of things-in-themselves] correspond *forms and relations of phenomena*", thereby implicitly acknowledging the existence of an 'appearance' in things-in-themselves; and, on the other hand, he rejected the idea that those things had an 'appearance', since form *(forma)* and appearance *(vid)* were synonymous.[143] To these objections, Plekhanov replied that 'form' and 'appearance' might only be identified in a very superficial sense, if one took 'form' to mean the simple 'external form' of the object. Hegel however had proved that the form is rather "the 'law' of object, or, to be more exact, its *structure*". [*ibid.* p.239][144] It was the objective properties and structures that corresponded to subjective appearance, depending on the working of our sense-organs: once again Plekhanov singled out a link between property and appearance which may be better articulated, but is not essentially different from the one he had outlined between object and hieroglyphic.

It is evident from this examination of Plekhanov's revised theory of knowledge that he did not get any closer to the theory of reflection. He rather rejected hieroglyphics for different reasons from those which led Lenin to criticize them. Jaroševskij is right in presenting the difference between their views as follows:

> [for Lenin] it is impossible to oppose appearance and object, since the qualitative determination of the appearance reflects the real qualitative determination of things, independently of the perceiving subject. According to Plekhanov, we should not oppose the appearance to the object because the sensory perception in its qualitative condition has no resemblance to the properties of real things. This condition, from his standpoint, is exclusively determined by the structure of the organism on which external objects act.[145]

It is natural for us to wonder why Plekhanov undertook such a complex correction of his own terminology. In those years Russian Marxists paid undoubtedly a great attention to ontological and epistemological topics. Works such as those by Bogdanov, that according to Plekhanov were "*a decisive denial of materialism*", [1901.XI.17-19][146] were having great success. In general the empirio-criticists' works were very quickly spreading in Russia, and they looked to Plekhanov like a real danger against which a coherent Marxist had to fight. [1903.IV] Moreover, Plekhanov felt compelled by the recent theoretical disputes to further his studies, since he always thought it was necessary for any Marxist to take philosophy seriously. [1905f, pp.341-342] In that period of time he therefore read his classics again and more carefully, which often led him to think over epistemological problems.

In particular Plekhanov later confessed that it had been Kant who convinced him that Secenov's terminology was "unsatisfactory". In the first edition of his *Critique of Pure Reason*, Kant in fact had written:

> ... in order for *noumenon* to mean a real object, to be distinguished from all the phenomena, it is not enough that I *free* my mind of all the contradictions of sensory intuition. But I must, also, have motive to admit another kind of intuition, different from the sensory kind, through which such an object could be given; since otherwise my thought is anyway empty, although free from contradictions.[147]

When he addressed himself to this passage, Plekhanov convinced himself that it was necessary "to emphasize that no other intuition but the sensory is possible; however this does not prevent us from knowing things owing to the impressions that they arouse in us". [1908d, p.242 note] In other words Plekhanov thought it was necessary clearly to differentiate himself and his own philosophy from Kant and all the metaphysical implications of the latter's phenomenalism. Although Plekhanov acknowledged things-in-themselves as something different from phenomena, i.e. as real objects, he aimed at being much more

'consistent' than Kant was. Here, to be consistent meant to Plekhanov to be a 'materialist': things-in-themselves were to be considered nothing other than external objects, existing independently of a subject, about which however we can know nothing but their action on our sense organs. [1908d, pp.226-227]

In order to support his materialism, Plekhanov proposed an 'ontological' foundation for external objects in his notes to the new edition of *Ludwig Feuerbach.* In the first edition, he had neglected to tackle the problem, since he thought then that the existence of external objects was immediately evident. In 1905 he again concluded that the existence of the external world could not be proved. However he declared:

> such "belief" [in the existence of the external world] is the necessary prior condition for *critical* thought in the best sense of the word; ... it is the unavoidable *salto vitale* of philosophy. [1905b, p.487][148]

One was led to this "belief" by a correct formulation of the basic philosophical question so as to get over the opposition between the *I* and the external world and to recognize the subject as merely "an organism endowed with consciousness" in accordance with Feuerbach. The subject in its turn was an object, just "*regarded from the other side*, from the side of thought and not from that of extension, as Spinoza would have said". [*loc.cit.*]

Plekhanov, thus, founded his theory of correspondence on a materialist version of Spinoza's psycho-physical parallelism, through Feuerbach on the one hand and contemporary physiology, in which Plekhanov was very interested, on the other. The new version of Plekhanov's theory of knowledge in the second edition of *Ludwig Feuerbach* seems to have aimed at meeting the requirements of both sounder scientific and philosophical foundations. Neither physiology, nor Spinoza and Feuerbach were however enough to deflect Plekhanov's antagonists' criticism.

C. The Theoretical Debate After 1905

Soon after the revolution of 1905 Ljubov' Aksel'rod noticed apprehensively that Bogdanov's empiriomonism was advancing "not day by day, but hour by hour". [1906.X.26/13] Empirio-criticism had a greater influence on Russian youth than ever: its Russian followers were providing laymen with popular expositions; Valentinov went so far as to recur to Mach himself for explanation and a sort of legitimation.[149] After the revolutionary break, new interventions enlivened the

theoretical debate: a few faithful disciples sided with Plekhanov, while Lenin rejected both his master's hieroglyphism and, even more resolutely, his Bolshevik comrades' Machism.[150] For his part, Plekhanov insisted that Machism and all the other trends (empirio-monism,empirio-symbolism, etc.) he grouped in this comprehensive concept, were the effects of an ignorant Russian intelligentsia that could do no more than follow Western philosophical fashions. [1905b, pp.67-71] According to Plekhanov's colorful metaphor, Russian intellectuals had just taken off the shoes in which they had run after neo-Kantianism, and they were already launching themselves out after "the two Ajaxes of empirio-criticism". Plekhanov concluded:

> "Cleopatra had many lovers!" But let whoever wishes fight them; I am less inclined to do it because I have not the slightest claim to please our contemporary intelligentsia: that is not the heroine of my romance.... [1908c, pp.210-211]

The contagion of empirio-criticism however did not infect the intelligentsia alone. At the beginning of 1907 Plekhanov received a letter from a Social Democrat, a "practical party worker", who was worrying about the philosophical disputes in progress within the party. He therefore asked Plekhanov to provide all the people who, like him, struggled in theoretical areas with a "more or less detailed examination of empirio-criticism from a Marxist standpoint" by writing a popular booklet on this subject. [1907.I.9] A little later another Social Democrat, a worker this time well-disposed towards empiriomonism, invited Plekhanov to stop his episodic scolding of his much more systematic antagonists and to present clearly his *Weltanschauung*. [1907-1908] In that period of time both Kautsky and Bogdanov were similarly asked by workers to clarify their positions or to side with one of the disputing factions. Bogdanov received, through the editorial staff of the journal *Vestnik zizni*, a letter from several Caucasian Social Democrats, who declared themselves supporters of Plekhanov's ideas against Machism. The Russian translator of Kautsky's article 'Über Marx und Mach' claimed that the article was Kautsky's answer to a Russian worker, who had asked the eminent German comrade to express his opinions about the philosophical disputes in progress within Russian social democracy.[151] Although it is uncertain whether ordinary workers really wrote such letters, it is certain that the echoes (and maybe much more than the echoes) of theoretical polemics reached the grass roots of social democracy.

In spite of Lenin's intentions and efforts, indeed, Russian Social Semocrats so tightly interlaced philosophical controversies with tactical disagreements that their theoretical discussions very often turned into

factional fights in which every member of the party and of the broader revolutionary movement had a stake.[152] In particular Plekhanov and his disciples insisted on the factional polemic they had begun years before in spite of the fact that philosophical factions were by no means synonymous with political ones, and the specific presence of followers of 'Machism' among both Bolsheviks and Mensheviks. Plekhanov and his followers however still considered 'Machism' to be the philosophy of Bolshevism, singling out supposed analogies and references between Lenin's subjectivism and voluntarism, on the one hand, and the empirio-criticists' idealism and phenomenalism, on the other. Their interpretation proved so successful that even *Die Neue Zeit* took it up,[153] thereby inducing the editorial staff of the Bolshevik organ *Proletarij* to state straightforwardly:

> In reality this philosophical dispute is not and, in our editorial staff's opinion, must not be factional; any attempt to present these disagreements as factional is radically erroneous.[154]

After the publication of the Machist collective volume *Essays on Marxist Philosophy*, Lenin himself felt compelled to make a clear distinction between his own thought and the ideas of Bogdanov and other Bolshevik Machists, by writing *Materialism and Empirio-Criticism*. Although as of 1905 Lenin thought Plekhanov was right in criticizing Machism, for a few years he had considered tactical questions to be the most important. He therefore had chosen to disregard philosophical matters to defend the unity of his faction.[155] Moreover, in 1908 Lenin often stated he felt too ignorant on philosophy to write on the theoretical polemic. In a couple of months, however, he decided he had to intervene against Machism and to do it "his way".[156]

Any attempt to clarify the political and tactical reasons that convinced Lenin to break the philosophical 'truce' he respected until 1908, would go far beyond the limits of the present study.[157] As for the importance of Lenin's intervention within the post-revolutionary philosophical polemic, it should be recalled that it did not have the momentous effects one might have expected. The first reactions among Russian Social Democrats were mainly unfavourable: both 'orthodox' and 'heretical' Marxists, for opposite reasons, gave Lenin's work a cold reception. Most of the thinkers whom Lenin harshly criticized retorted by emphasizing his own ignorance and grossness in philosophy, as well as his hidden but significant 'religious' or 'idealistic' thought. Ljubov' Aksel'rod, who of course agreed with Lenin's attacks on the Machists, hastened to defend Plekhanov's theory of knowledge by underlining Lenin's serious lack of information and understanding.[158] As for

Plekhanov, on Lenin's book he wrote just this:

> I regret very much that even that adversary of idealism Vladimir Lenin considered it necessary to have a dig at my hieroglyphics in his book "*Materialism etc.*": in this case he had to gang up with people who have given unquestionable and evident proofs that gun powder was not invented by them! [1908d, p.243 note][159]

Plekhanov's sarcastic tone should not surprise us since, in the years following the Revolution of 1905, the Russian Marxists generally discussed their philosophical disagreements with an extraordinarily ruthless obstinacy. It is hard to understand why very abstract philosophical questions (such as the correct notion of *Ding an sich*, the relationship between matter and spirit, or the criticism of both these ideas) became so important to Russian Marxists at such a difficult moment. It was not clear to their contemporaries either. As Kautsky wrote:

> Clarity about Mach's theory of knowledge is undoubtedly a very good thing, but ... nothing is more erroneous than to attach importance to this question as a party question and thereby further to disrupt Russian social democracy that is already disrupted enough without those disagreements.[160]

Convinced that sharing this or that philosophic belief was essentially a *Privatsache*, he recommended that all the leaders of the Russian proletariat "turn the attention of the latter to questions of a wholly different kind". However Russian revolutionary leaders at that time really considered their philosophical discussion as important as thinking over their recent revolutionary experience. Moreover, they thought only a 'correct' theory could provide them with the necessary means to understand the historical movement and successfully take part in it. As Bogdanov wrote:

> The philosophical integrity of our *Weltanschauung* is very important if we are to clearly understand the sense and aims of social struggle and to firmly adopt a coherent tactic of class.[161]

Working out a correct theory would have given much more than theoretical superiority within the party: according to Russian Marxists soon after the revolution of 1905, it would have been the way to understand thoroughly their recent political experiences, to avoid further mistakes and to become more successful in practice. Plekhanov - and most Russian Marxists of any tendency agreed with him - was

persuaded that "nowadays an ideologist of the working class *has no right to be indifferent to philosophy.*" [1906a, p.295]

In 1910 Nikolaj Potresov wrote an article about what he called "the trifles" that were overcoming the party, and he reiterated Kautsky's opinion that one's conception of the thing-in-itself should be considered as a *Privatsache.*[162] Immediately, Machists and orthodox Marxists alike repudiated his position. Bazarov held that if the philosophical discussion had not yet come to important results, it was because Marxists had not taken it seriously enough. In his opinion:

> theory of knowledge is no less tightly connected with Marxism, than many other "abstract" theories, whose importance no Marxist doubts, for example philosophy of history and even the theory of value.[163]

For his part, Plekhanov recalled that Marx and Engels themselves had attached greater meaning to philosophy than Kautsky and other German comrades did; [1910d, p.152] and Lenin maintained that philosophical disputes had profound political significance. Potresov had suggested that "the debate on the 'things-in-themselves' with its magnetic force might be a *fata morgana* who beckons the tired travellers that know no way out of the desert of political vegetating."[164] Lenin, on the contrary, stated:

> A time of social and political reaction, a time of "digestion" of the rich lessons of revolution is not by chance the time, when the basic theoretical, including philosophical, questions move to one of the first places for any lively tendency.[165]

Of course at that point Plekhanov's conceptions became one of the favorite topics for argument: Plekhanov embodied orthodoxy itself, and any effort at critical reflection over Marxism had to tackle his thought. The Russian Social Democrats had commonly considered Plekhanov, as Valentinov wrote, as "the 'disciple' who best succeeded in formulating and understanding the real 'soul' of his masters' philosophical heritage."[166] To open the road to a newer Marxist philosophy it was therefore necessary first of all to deal with Plekhanov's thought. In 1908 Deborin wrote:

> For some time now and as if according to a special plan, all the critics of materialism have sung the same song with the same monotonous refrain: Marx' and Engels' materialism is one thing, Plekhanov-Bel'tov's materialism is another one.[167]

No longer respected as the most faithful interpretation of Marxism, to the Machists Plekhanov's philosophy seemed to be an eclectic mixture of Enlightenment materialism and Kantianism, which only the naive Russian Marxists could have regarded as truth for so long.[168] Bazarov forcefully wrote:

> Plekhanov's materialism is dead scholasticism, which stays "on this side" of any scientific research... G.V. Plekhanov's *Weltanschauung*, like his antagonist Bernstein's *Weltanschauung*, may be characterized as a Marxism contaminated with Kantianism. The fact that G.V. Plekhanov increasingly "contaminated" himself with Kant precisely during his struggle for orthodoxy must not surprise us. That is the typical history of the genesis and development of heresies. The most eminent heretics of the first centuries of the Christian church were led astray precisely in their struggle for orthodoxy against everybody and every kind of heresies.[169]

Plekhanov's worst heresy seemed to all his critics to be his idea of the thing-in-itself. According to them, Plekhanov actually used the same language Kant had used about this subject despite his oft-declared disagreement with the latter's philosophy.[170] As they pointed out, the thing-in-itself was to Plekhanov, as to Kant, something abstract and undefinable; its ontological status was consequently unclear: did it identify itself with the matter or substance, or not?[171] It was also uncertain whether it was unknowable or half-knowable. According to his critics, in Plekhanov's understanding the 'thing-in-itself' was to be considered as "a real *instabilis terra, innabilis unda*".[172] Bogdanov, in particular, supposed that Plekhanov was actually holding two different conceptions of the thing-in-itself: one within his theory of hieroglyphics, the other in its later revision. Bogdanov characterized them as follows:

> the first tends to explain what is known, i.e. the "phenomenon" through what is unknown, i.e. the "thing-in-itself", about which we know just that it is "wholly unlike" the phenomenon. The second conception attaches to the "things-in-themselves" such a bare "existence", lacking in any sensory character, that is logically equivalent to *non-being*.[173]

Although Machists had different views of what the Plekhanovite thing-in-itself was like, they would generally have subscribed to the opinion Bazarov expressed in the following words:

> I am not going to judge which is better, a dead or a dying idea, the *caput mortuum* or the *caput moriturum* of the abstraction. In any case, Plekhanov's thing-in-itself is *as abstract an idea* as Kant's is.[174]

Just as Plekhanov was summing up his *Weltanschauung* in his *Fundamental Problems of Marxism*, [1908a] his philosophy was being criticized as eclectic and more or less consciously phenomenalist. Moreover, the Machists thought that the parallelism Plekhanov had identified between things-in-themselves and our sensations actually contradicted his monism. His psycho-physical parallelism in fact seemed to imply an unavoidable dualism, which even Plekhanov's Spinozist solution could not really overcome.[175] Finally the *salto vitale* Plekhanov himself had acknowledged as a basic presupposition of his onto-epistemological conceptions, seemed to confirm the opinion of those who considered his materialism to be a 'religion' of matter.[176]

In this way, while his political theories seemed to be vanquished by events,[177] Plekhanov found himself harshly criticized and accused of the same faults with which he charged his antagonists. In 1908 he finally broke into the polemic in progress with a few detailed articles on theoretical questions, which were explicitly devoted to a criticism of Mach's and Bogdanov's views. The latter had actually personally invited Plekhanov to take a definite position in an open letter, where, by the way, he accused Plekhanov of having polemized "on credit" until then, without really facing his antagonists' criticisms.[178] Plekhanov answered in three articles published between 1908 and 1910. [1908c,d; 1910b] In them he tried to defend himself and his orthodoxy by proposing his own thought as a *materialismus militans* against empirio-criticist 'deviations' or idealistic and solipsistic trends.

Once again Plekhanov turned to Engels, insisting that his own theory of knowledge was actually identical with the latter's, although presented in different words. Plekhanov knew that Engels had denied the existence of things-in-themselves, but he claimed Engels was referring solely to noumena, not things-in-themselves as considered in his own theory. Engels had always acknowledged things as they exist beyond our representation. Plekhanov insisted that his things-in-themselves were nothing other than those things that exist independently of us. [1908d, pp.250-251] Unlike Kant, who considered noumenon as absolutely inaccessible to our senses, Plekhanov stated:

> all things-in-themselves are material. But by the materiality of things I mean ... their faculty of acting on our senses in any event, immediately or mediately, and of thereby exciting in us some sensations or other. [*ibid.* pp.226-227]

Material was whatever "exists independently of our consciousness and that, by acting on our senses, excites in us certain *sensations*, that in their turn underlie our representations of the external world, i.e. of those material objects and their reciprocal relations." [*ibid.* pp.230-231] It was absolutely useless to ask materialists, as Bogdanov did,[179] what matter is, beyond its action on us. As Ljubov Aksel'rod had already emphasized,[180] it was an absurd question that excluded any chance of a reasonable answer "by the way it is formulated". [ibid.p.237] Experience, as "the result of the reciprocal action between subject and object", [*ibid.* p.234] was, in fact, the only sphere within which there was any sense in asking questions about external reality.

This did not imply of course that the existence of the object itself depended on the subject. On this question Plekhanov wrote:

> Anyone who asserts that there is no object without subject, simply confuses two absolutely different concepts: the existence of the object "in itself" and its existence in *the subject's representation.* We have no right to identify these two kinds of existence. [*ibid.* p.235]

In his last analysis Plekhanov never abandoned that 'parallelism' between reality and representations, thing-in-itself and phenomenon, for which he was criticized. By emphasizing, however, that his theory of knowledge was identical to that of Engels himself, he wanted to demonstrate once more that he was the most faithful of Marx' disciples, as he had actually been considered in Russia until then.

D. A Decade of Scholarship

Plekhanov's best-known Western biographer, Samuel Baron, defined the last decade in Plekhanov's life as a passage from politics to scholarship. Although Plekhanov never gave up his political activity, aiming at party reunification, he devoted more and more energies to artistic and literary, historical and philosophical studies. And his greatest historical work, the *History of Russian Social Thought* in four volumes, dates to the last years in his life. [1914; 1915; 1917a; 1918]

Plekhanov's interest in theoretical activity might have been occasioned by the objective decline of his political role. In Baron's words:

> his inability to adjust his outlook to Russian realities as manifested in the Revolution of 1905 made the last decade of his life -

> politically, at any rate - a protracted, painful, and somewhat meaningless epilogue.[181]

But it is also true that his awkwardness in dealing with Russian reality drove Plekhanov back to his books. Knowledge was his most effective means of analysis and, in the end, of political struggle.Wading through the complex history of Russian thought, he claimed that the real task of history was the explanation and not only the exposition of forces and movements within reality. From this point of view he rejected Rickert's division of natural and human sciences. Plekhanov thought that they were basically identical, since both attempted to discover general laws within nature and social being [1911c, pp.513-515][182] and, as a consequence, to lead human praxis within both fields.

Although he kept emphasizing that knowledge had to aim at understanding reality in order to successfully act within it, Plekhanov was not ready to adjust his world-view in reply to the challenge of a new political situation and new philosophical ideas. According to him, Marxian materialism still proved to be the most effective means of analysis of reality. In considering contemporaneous Western European philosophies and comparing them with Marxism, he only intended to show the superiority of the latter. In 1910 Plekhanov pridefuly declared: "my world-view has not changed since the beginning of the Eighties of the last century, when I became a Marxist". [1956, p.15] Russian Marxists' confusion, uncertainty and awkwardness in understanding their contemporaneous reality, their facility in yielding to allurements of false masters should have not been ascribed to supposed weak points and incompletess of Marxism, but rather to their ignoring its basic principles. Plekhanov complained: "those socialists that know Mach, Avenarius, Windelband, etc., etc., rather well, have not the slightest idea of Engels', Marx' and Feuerbach's philosophy". [1910f, p.483] While many of Bogdanov's, Lunacharsky's, Valentinov's and Juškevič's volumes were being published, Plekhanov recalled that the second printing of his translation of *Ludwig Feuerbach* lay unsold in the publisher's warehouse. [*ibid.* p.482] In spite of his personal authority, Plekhanov could hardly find a publisher for his follower Deborin's book on "dialectical materialism". [*loc.cit.*; 1909.IX.30; 1913.X.24][183] If materialism seemed to be generally disregarded, Plekhanov could not but defend it again, as he had always done against critics and "idealists" of any trend. He wrote:

> in our country nowadays philosophy serves as the most reliable means in adapting our social consciousness to our social being. Being, anyway, is taking a bourgeois character; consciousness must take it as well. And philosophy vigorously helps it. ... We, as

> socialists, [however] should not adapt social consciousness to a social bourgeois being, but prepare the workers' minds to struggle against such a being. [1910f, p.483]

In defending Marxism, Plekhanov first of all tried to demonstrate again that it was a comprehensive *Weltanschauung*. Marxism needed no integration of different points of view. It was quite easy for Plekhanov to consider any attempt of "completing" Marxism with other philosophical opinions as a new form of revisionism and to condemn it as such. But soon after the Revolution of 1905 Plekhanov had to face another, much more insidious attempt to revise Marxist philosophy and especially its epistemology. To Plekhanov 'Dietzgenism' appeared to be particularly dangerous as a concealed revisionism, since it tried to revise Marxist philosophy through opinions that had been considered Marxist themselves.

Joseph Dietzgen was then very popular inside and outside Russia. Friedrich Adler, the Dutch Marxist school, and Eugen Dietzgen, who helped spread his father's thought, brought Marxists' attention to Dietzgen's philosophy. In particular, so-called "Machists" could find in Dietzgen a sort of legitimation of their own philosophical reflections since Dietzgen's thought often resembled empirio-criticism. Kautsky himself noticed it; Mach acknowledged it in his preface to the Russian translation of his *Analysis of Sensations*; Dauge, the Russian publisher of Dietzgen's works, compared him with Bogdanov.[184]

To the consternation of the orthodox, Marx and Engels themselves had appreciated Dietzgen as a thinker. In *Ludwig Feuerbach* Engels stated that Dietzgen had understood dialectics independently of Hegel and Engels himself; Marx had considered him to be a real proletarian philosopher, sometimes naive and confused, but able to write "many excellent things".[185] Thence Bogdanov could draw indirect approval of his own researches, which led him so far away from Plekhanov's orthodoxy. He wrote:

> [Dietzgen's and Plekhanov's] disagreements concern basic questions. That, however, did not prevent Marx, who could not be very well acquainted with comrade Plekhanov's philosophical opinions, from calling Dietzgen "our philosopher" and treating him with respect, as a serious thinker ... .[186]

Russian Machists considered Dietzgen as the Marxist philosopher who had completed and developed Marx' ideas on epistemology. Thereby they justified their own attempts at "completing" Marxism and, simultaneously, they brought into disrepute Plekhanov's orthodoxy, by showing that it was not the only faithful interpretation of the masters'

views.[187]

Plekhanov intervened in this discussion soon after Dietzgen's works appeared in Russian translations. In his early review of a couple of books by and about Dietzgen, Plekhanov insisted that the "proletarian philosopher" basically agreed with Marxist orthodoxy. Any attempt to oppose his conception to Marxist materialism was therefore groundless. Sharing Marx' judgement in one of his letters to Kugelmann,[188] Plekhanov acknowledged that Dietzgen had a great talent as a thinker, very unusual in a self-taught man, but he pointed out as well Dietzgen's many lapses, especially about the concepts of materialism and idealism. Dietzgen had aimed at overcoming their opposition and unilaterality, but he had not really grasped their meaning. [1907a, p.115] As regards Dietzgen's many interesting ideas, Plekhanov denied that they could mean anything different from the letter of Marxism. [*ibid.* p.109] For Plekhanov, Marx and Engels had worked out a precise and complete conception also on epistemology, the field to which most of Dietzgen's widespread suggestions referred. Once more Plekhanov cited Marx on the relationship between "material" and "ideal", the latter being the translation of the former within human mind. Plekhanov concluded:

> Marx' words on materialistic dialectic include at the same time and first of all a wholly definite "critique of knowledge" as well. [*ibid.* p.111]

The debate on Dietzgenism had spread within the whole of International social democracy, while Marxism everywhere faced challenges from contemporaneous "bourgeois" philosophy.[189] But Plekhanov found the Russian situation to be particularly difficult. Persuaded that the Russian intelligentsia had not studied enough, and was therefore an easy prey to any new cultural fashion, Plekhanov feared that the various critics of Marxism would succeed in perverting its essence. In 1910 Plekhanov wrote:

> in our country bourgeois theoretical reaction, that nowadays causes real devastation in the ranks of our progressive intelligentsia, takes place under the banner of philosophical idealism. As a consequence, to bring us those philosophical theories which, although essentially idealistic, at the same time give themselves out as the last word of natural science, alien to any metaphysical premise, threatens a special harm. To struggle against those theories is not superflous, it is really unavoidable. [1910b, p.300]

Plekhanov sided against some 'fashionable' Western philosophical trends in his reviews of the Russian translations of Bergson's,

Petzoldt's, Richter's, Boutroux' works, in order to warn his Russian readers against the allurements of their thought. [1911b, p.520] Juškevič, Bazarov and the other so-called Machists, who often translated and edited Western philosophers' books, interested Plekhanov much less than their foreign masters did.[190] Even while criticizing Bogdanov, who was no doubt a very original thinker, Plekhanov found it necessary to devote a large part of his articles to Mach, [1908d, pp.252-263] since he thought Bogdanov's empiriomonism derived in the last analysis from Mach's empirio-criticism, in spite of Bogdanov's criticism of the latter.

Plekhanov, of course, wanted to discredit his opponent by maintaining that Bogdanov had only adopted and often mistaken Western philosophical trends. But, in general, Plekhanov was convinced that Russian "Machists" were just young people who badly echoed fashionable philosophical theories. He received many Russian books for review in this period, but preferred to read the Russian translations of Western books rather than Russian originals. Among Machists only Bogdanov attracted Plekhanov's attention. He read and annotated only a few pages of a couple of books by Juškevič and Berman, and he never reviewed them.[191] By contrast, he deemed Western philosophers to be much more substantive and, as a consequence, much more dangerous. Thus, even when he expressed regard for a non-Marxist thinker, Plekhanov invariably followed with a dogmatic attack. For him, Western bourgeois philosophers showed their talent only if they expressed ideas that sounded close to Marxist "truth". For example, Plekhanov appreciated Bergson's attempt to link together consciousness and praxis, but he still emphasized that Bergson could not go very far along this line because of his basic idealism. [1909a, pp.315-316; 1974f, p.100]

Plekhanov thought it was particularly necessary to reject contemporary Western European epistemology. Mach, Petzoldt, Richter, all very popular in Russia, maintained the metaphysical nature of concepts such as substance, matter, object, that Plekhanov considered as the corner-stones of his orthodox materialistic world-view. By rejecting their criticism, Plekhanov aimed to defend Marxism from both the charge of being a sort of "metaphysics of matter" and the critique of having not grasped the modern evolution of natural science - the very charges that Russian Machists were bringing against Plekhanov himself.

Plekhanov thought that Empirio-criticists' critique of the concept of substance was logically questionable and substantively sterile. He summarized its consequences as follows:

As a matter of fact, to say that no substance exists means that there

> is no world-in-itself, there is only a world-for-us, for perceiving subjects. But what are those "we", those perceiving subjects? Should one not attribute to them a *substantial* meaning? Should we not assume that human *I* is that *substance* which is the basis of phenomena? ... If there is no "I" as a substance that *feels* sensations and there are no things-in-themselves as substances that *cause* those sensations, what remains to us? There remain only those sensations. [1910c, p.452]

But according to Plekhanov it was not possible to build any objective and scientifical knowledge on this ground. On the one hand, Plekhanov pointed out that empirio-criticism did not really account for those sensations which it chose as its basis. Plekhanov wrote on the pages of Mach's *Analysis of Sensations*: "he does not understand the genesis of sensations. He therefore takes them as they were *ready*. Thereby the problem is not solved, it is removed".[192] On the other hand, Plekhanov thought that from such a ground the argument necessarily descended into a solipsism, which was typical of idealism. Petzoldt's attempt at justifying the objectivity of the world-for-us without referring to a "metaphysical" world-in-itself was deemed to be a confused "pluralism":

> [Petzoldt's] timid idealism imagines itself to be a *monism*, because it seems that he removed the "*dualism*" between being-in-itself and being-for-us. But in which logical way he "removed" that supposed dualism? By acknowledging that the existence of an object independently on our representation is only its existence in other people's representation ... . But if it exists in the representation of each "I", without having any "being-in-itself", it has as many existences, as observers. [*ibid.* p.458]

Plekhanov was certain that the solution for all those problems had to be found in materialism, particularly in considering subject, according to Feuerbach, as a subject-object, i.e. "a real material being, a body endowed with the faculty for feeling and thinking". [1908d, p.254] Once again Plekhanov answered a main question by relying on the correspondence between being and thinking. From this point of view, sensation "is only the subjective side of a process which starts under the influence of a given body ... on another body, organized in a certain way, for instance on human body." [1910c, p.462] In order to investigate the genesis of sensation, one had to consider the action of external objects on our sense organs. Only such a theory could account both for the subjectivity of sensation and for the objectivity of knowledge.

Far from lagging behind the development of science, for Plekhanov materialism was to be the philosophical correlative of any scientific knowledge. Both human and natural sciences as such aimed at analysing, describing, and explaining an objective reality. The theory of evolution - to which Plekhanov more and more often referred,- geology, and history necessarily supposed the objective existence of the world independently and before any knowing subject. [1911a, pp.490-491; 1974g, p.115] As regards physics, Plekhanov thought that "*non*-materialist natural science is impossible." [1908d, p.260] Mach himself, "as a naturalist, continually needs to go over to the *materialistic point of view*, althought he does it absolutely unconsciously". [*ibid.* p.259]

Plekhanov, however, also recognized that contemporary Western philosophers and important scientists doubted such a necessary relationship between natural science and materialism. Yet he reaffirmed the basic principles of his conception against any sort of criticism. He wrote:

> Someone might observe that the concept of matter itself must essentially change in view of the striking physical discoveries of recent years. That is true. But none of these discoveries will undermine that definition of matter as what (existing "in itself") acts, mediately or immediately, or under certain conditions can act on our external senses. That is enough for me. [1910c, p.469 note]

For Plekhanov modern scientific discoveries - atomic physics, laws of thermodynamics, etc. - could cause a deep crisis within old mechanism, but not within dialectical materialism. [1916, p.637] On the contrary, modern science provided Marxists with authoritative confirmations of dialectics. [1909b, p.503; 1916, p.638; 1974f, pp.102, 105] Plekhanov jotted down: "the newest discoveries of physics more and more confirm Engels' view on the world as matter in continuous development". [1973b, p.102] Plekhanov maintained that the general lines of contemporary epistemology agreed with the dialectical conception of knowledge, which took into account the objective relations among things, their reciprocal 'functions'. According to Plekhanov, only materialism could give a real scientific analysis of those 'functions'.

On this subject Raul Richter had emphasized that contemporary science chose as its object relations and not things, and that those things, as a consequence, came out to be complexes of sensations, which at the end are relations too. Plekhanov remarked: "And what happens, if a certain concept of thing brings chaos into the concept of relation?". [1938i, p.227][193] In his opinion this was the case with idealism in general and empirio-criticism in particular. Only by

proceeding from the acknowledgment of the objectivity of things, i.e. of their existence independently of knowing subject, in short only by proceeding from the basic principle of materialism, was it possible to avoid reducing the relations among things to the subject's fantastic representations. [1911a, p.490]

In Plekhanov's opinion, science had to refer to materialism also in order to justify its claiming to help human praxis. The idea of science as "conventional" knowledge could give no grounds to such a pretense. On science, Emile Boutroux wrote:

> Science is not an impression that thing leaves on a passive mind, but it is the whole of signs, that the reason invents in order to interpret the things by means of already given concepts the first source of which escapes us, and also in order to thereby acquire the power of forcing things to serve to our aims.

Referring to this passage, Plekhanov wrote on the pages of the book: "Which is possible only by means of correspondence between 'concepts' 'signs', 'realities'". [1939b, p.207][194] Only the correspondence between knowledge and things, their properties and their reciprocal relations could guarantee a successful practice. Moreover, Plekhanov rejected the hypothesis that man owned already "given" concepts, which meant a return to innatism. According to him, only physiological organization was inborn, though modified by the evolution of the species and the continous adaptation to the external environment.

In the last decade of his life, Plekhanov kept relying on his theory of correspondence in order to answer any epistemological question. To him, the main problem of science remained the relationship between knowledge and reality, subject and object. He wrote:

> What do those words that amateur philosophers often repeat nowadays mean: *substance is an abstraction*? Any *concept is an abstraction*, and if I have a *concept of substance*, then substance, *as a concept of mine*, is an abstraction too. But that is not the question. The point is *whether there is anything outside my "I", corresponding to this "abstraction"*. [1908b,p.771]

Any theory which tried to account for knowledge without referring to the objective exsistence of the world outside the subject was bound to fail.

All of Plekhanov's last passages on epistemological subjects were devoted to demonstrate that materialist theory of knowledge was able to account for the newest scientifical results without the contradictions and

the agnosticism which were typical of any, more or less coherent or explicit, idealism. Plekhanov found that Windelband had clearly expressed the difference between idealist and materialist epistemologies in a note about Plato and Democritus. Materialists did not restrict knowledge to mere sense perception. They admitted that sensations were subjective, but they did not thereby reject perception as deceptive; on the contrary, they chose it as their basis in order to proceed towards conceptual knowledge. The latter, in its turn, did not refer to a superior immaterial world, but to the study of relations and laws within material reality. As such, conceptual knowledge had to take sensory knowledge as its ground. [1910c, p.465 note][195] To admit the subjectivity of sensations, which were the basis of the whole of knowledge, did not mean to doubt the objectivity of knowledge itself. Plekhanov often dwelled upon this subject. In 1910 he wrote:

> Knowledge [*znanie*], like sensation, is always subjective, because the process of knowing [*poznanie*] is nothing other than the process of the origin of representations within a subject ... The problem is not whether knowledge [*znanie*] is subjective or not: it goes without saying. The problem is whether knowledge [*znanie*] might be true. In other words: whether representations of properties of a thing, provoked within subject, do correspond, i.e. are not at variance with its real properties? But it is easy to answer this question, if one remembers that our representations of the thing arise on the basis of those sensations, that we feel while somehow coming into contact with the thing. [*ibid.* p.463]

Plekhanov continued to consider the human physiological apparatus as the objective ground for the correspondence between knowledge and reality. According to Plekhanov, the properties of things as we perceive them might be and are different from the objective properties as they exist in the things-in-themselves, [1938i, p.239] but their correspondence is always sure. In fact any perception is provoked by a certain objective status; in other words, our physiological apparatus precisely and univocally translates objective conditions into its own language. Plekhanov thought that it was possible to single out the relationship existing between intellect and world by considering the subject as 'subject-object'. While commenting a passage by Dietzgen, where the latter defined human intellect as a "camera" in front of the world as the whole of movements and changes, Plekhanov wrote: "1) intellect 2) world. Where is the unity? Only within matter". [1974b, p.79] To judge from Plekhanov's many jottings on the pages of Dietzgen's books, it seems that he considered one of Dietzgen's worst mistakes the latter's misunderstanding of the relationship between

'subjective' and 'objective' within man.[196] On the one hand, Dietzgen admitted that knowledge could 'reflect' reality, which Lenin liked much more than Plekhanov did. On the other, Dietzgen acknowledged a few inborn elements within human intellect, which was in its turn inborn and endowed with the faculty of development in a certain direction.

Thereby Dietzgen ended up by admitting both inborn and acquired moments within knowledge, without accounting either for their relationship, or for the genesis of the *a priori*, which only idealists could admit as such.[197] Plekhanov thought that biological evolutionism provided him with the chance of explaining the real relationship between subjective and objective, *a priori* and *a posteriori*. To him, the whole of knowledge was *a posteriori* and arouse within the relationship between man and his natural and social environment. The *a priori* elements were themselves a result of development and evolution. [*loc.cit.*][198]

Although Plekhanov more and more emphasized what he considered the 'scientific' ground of his epistemology, he did not change its general lines. In 1916, in what has to be considered the last passage Plekhanov published about epistemology, once more he presented his theory as follows:

> To a human body, the *result* of the action of an external object is *objectively* purely *material* (a new status of certain tissues), but *subjectively* it is *psychological* (a certain impression). But in both cases it will be the status of a *knowing object*, i.e. a *subject. In this sense any knowledge is subjective. To be knowable means to exist for someone else.* But from this, it does not follow that the subject cannot achieve true knowledge of the object, or, in other words, that this *being for someone else* does not correspond to *being in itself.* It has been possible to make such a supposition only as long as it was retained that the knowing *I* was something immaterial, being *outside nature*. But that is absolutely wrong. [1916, p.635]

In Plekhanov's opinion, the subject had rather to be considered as subject-object, as the philosophical tradition of materialism from Spinoza to Feuerbach, contemporary physiology, and theory of evolution seemed to confirm.

CHAPTER TWO

Philosophical Influences on Plekhanov's Theory of Knowledge

I. THE HISTORY OF MATERIALISM

In order to understand the internal genesis and development of Plekhanov's epistemology, it is now necessary to show how his readings and reflections on previous philosophers' thought had influenced his own thinking. Since studying philosophy had always meant a great deal to Plekhanov, it is not surprising that he carried on philosophical studies all through his life. A contemporary stated that Plekhanov knew the classical materialists' and Hegel's works almost by heart.[1] His many notebooks, now kept in the *Dom Plekhanova* Library, provide us with a unique opportunity to read Plekhanov's own marginalia, thereby reconstructing his searching and conclusions.

Although interested in philosophy in general, Plekhanov naturally paid a special attention to materialist thought. Following Marx and Engels,[2] Plekhanov singled out two main trends in the history of philosophy: one tries "to explain the world" by starting from the subject, the other explains it by starting from "the properties of the object". [1938g, p.163] According to Plekhanov, only the latter can account for natural, social, and political phenomena: both the history of thought and the successes of the natural sciences were produced as evidence. [1896, p.142]

Plekhanov's polemic against Bernstein clearly shows that he thought it very important to any 'real' Marxist to go through the history and development of his own philosophical tradition. Moreover, by singling out a materialistic trend in the history of philosophy, as opposed to the idealistic tradition, Plekhanov added authority to his participation in the polemics of the moment, where he always played the role of defender of materialism against opponents he always considered more or less conscious idealists.

But Plekhanov also had theoretical reasons for being concerned with the history of materialism. He thought that in the history of any ideology the earlier conceptions influenced later ones. According to his historical materialism, superstructure depended on the base: any moment of ideology depended on the conditions of the productive forces, through the mediation of social psychology. It was however undeniable that the ideology of a certain epoch was closely linked to the ideology of the

past, at least in its 'form': the history of literature, philosophy, art showed how a given epoch 'reacted' to the preceding one, perhaps by imitating or by rejecting some of its features. [1930, pp.290-291, note] Any moment within the history of materialism had therefore inherited at least a few common general lines from previous conceptions. Plekhanov actually thought a common approach somehow connected Democritus, Spinoza, the eighteenth-century Enlightenment thinkers, Feuerbach, and Marx. It is therefore clear why, in writing his *Essays on the History of Materialism*, Plekhanov set Marx next to d'Holbach and Helvétius: only if compared to its 'forerunners', could historical materialism be truly appreciated in its original theoretical significance. [1896]

According to Plekhanov, Marxism was the high point of a whole tradition of thought, to which Marxism itself remained closely connected. Plekhanov harshly rejected the widely held opinion of those, such as Lange, who thought that Vogt, Moleschott and Büchner were the only contemporary materialists, thereby disregarding Marxism. [*ibid.* p.141] When Lange wrote that Gassendi was "the only [eminent materialist] who possessed, and conspicuously, any historical sense", thereby implying that historical materialism could not be considered as a part of the whole tradition of philosophical materialism, Plekhanov noted: "And Marx?".[3]

The materialist tradition to which Marxism belonged, in Plekhanov's opinion, was actually very broad, including any system of thought that argued that nature is primary as regards the 'spirit' and that one must explain nature through its own forces, without positing empty metaphysical principles. [1898c, p.418; 1896, p.36] By rejecting the ideas of 'spirit', 'soul', 'God' as mere abstractions, materialism could overcome the difficulties that were fatal to any dualism. As for Plekhanov, only philosophical monism, which tries to explain phenomena in terms of one principle only, [1895a, p.510] could really aim to solve the supreme problem of the subject-object relationship. While dualists consider being and thought as opposite terms, without ever being able to explain how it is possible that "two separate substances, having nothing in common, can influence each other", [*loc.cit.*] monists deem spirit and matter, thought and being to be two classes of phenomena with a common foundation. [1905b, p.74] Idealistic monism pays for this solution by finally reducing being to thought; materialism on the contrary maintains the specificity and autonomy of both. Hence, according to Plekhanov, a materialist could not share any 'reductionistic' theory of knowledge. Once one had abandoned the idea that a hypothetical 'thinking substance' existed independently of the 'extended or material substance', one had logically to consider thought a function of matter, parallel but not identical to movement. [1916, p.632] Having rejected the idea of 'soul' as a

metaphysical fantasy, the materialist could not but consider man to be essentially an organism, a bio-physiological, rather than a psychological reality. Sensory knowledge therefore became the main means a person could count on in order to relate to the natural environment in which he lived. For Plekhanov, "the main difference between materialistic and idealistic epistemologies" was exactly "the recognition of matter as the source of our sensations". [1908d, p.232 note] According to Plekhanov, therefore, materialistic theory of knowledge was no more than a sort of 'naturalistic' sensualism, which widely disregarded the complex dialectical mediation between subject and object that Marx had outlined in the idea of 'praxis'. Plekhanov was profoundly convinced that the main epistemological problems had already been solved by pre-Marxian materialism, and that the cognitive relation was to be sought at the 'natural' level of the biological relationship between the organism and its milieu. By referring to a whole philosophical tradition that he understood from this point of view, Plekhanov legitimated his epistemology which was mainly founded on contemporary scientific, psycho-physiological research. The following inquiry into Plekhanov's philosophical readings aims at showing that it was their 'naturalistic' features that he valued in his authors' epistemologies.

Before coming our analysis, we must however point out that Plekhanov had never been a 'scholarly' reader: his concern with philosophy was constantly informed by the vicissitudes of his political life. It is therefore clear that he was often ready to 'project' his own beliefs onto other philosophers, rather than to undertake a cautious analysis of their thoughts.

II. SPINOZA

Since the 1890's Plekhanov had considered Spinoza one of his philosophical *auctoritates*. Plekhanov perceived Spinoza's influence as pervading the whole history of materialism, from the French eighteenth-century Enlightenment thinkers, to Feuerbach, and finally to Marx and Engels themselves. [1927, p.340] It was Spinoza who first 'correctly' solved the basic ontological problem by stating the unity of being and thought, while rejecting their identification. On these grounds any further monism was to be considered somehow a revival of Spinoza's thought. Plekhanov concluded that "contemporary materialism merely represents more or less conscious Spinozism". [*ibid.* p.339]

During Plekhanov's fight against Bernstein and Stern, their

understanding of Spinoza became an ideological battlefield, but he had surely known Spinoza's *Ethics* before that time, since, in one of his notebooks that dates back to the early 1890's, he had quoted a passage from this work.[4] During his polemic with German revisionism, Plekhanov probably felt compelled to carry out further studies into Spinoza's thought. His knowledge, however, was always limited to the *Ethics*: in the *Dom Plekhanova* Library there are other works by Spinoza (e.g.: *Tractatus theologicus-politicus*, *De intellectus emendatione*) but, while all three of the Library's copies of the *Ethics* show copious marginalia, testifying to Plekhanov's frequent consultation and thorough reflections, the copies of Spinoza's other works present no trace of Plekhanov's reading.[5] He did pay more attention to Spinoza's *Correspondence*, but mostly to the letters where Spinoza dwelled upon some central subjects from the *Ethics*.[6]

It is easy to understand why Plekhanov especially appreciated Spinoza's *Ethics*: there he could find views on the subject-object relationship, which Plekhanov considered Spinoza's main contribution to the development of materialism. Plekhanov, indeed, rejected the idealistic interpretation of Spinoza's thought, though he knew it was often based on textual evidence. According to Spinoza, for instance, "divine nature" came first in the order of knowledge and "it should have been contemplated before anything else", but Plekhanov considered such a statement as "sham objection against Spinoza's materialism."[7] In spite of Spinoza's theological terminology, Plekhanov, like Feuerbach, believed that the Spinozist substance identifies itself with nature rather than with God. [1917b, p.672] According to Plekhanov, the fact that Spinoza's substance-nature was material and spiritual at the same time was not a barrier to this interpretation. On the contrary, it was the best proof of Spinoza's own 'materialism', since Plekhanov thought that materialism affirmed the 'correspondence' between subject and object, not their 'identity'. Plekhanov wrote:

> For a materialist, sensation and thought, consciousness, is the internal state of a moving matter. But no materialist ... *has ever "reduced"* consciousness to *movement* and *explained* each by the other. [1905b, p.76]

This was exactly the meaning Plekhanov attached to Spinoza's view on the unity of substance. As Spinoza wrote:

> Extended substance and thinking substance are one and the same substance, which is now comprehended under the former attribute, now under the latter. So also a mode of extension and the idea of

that mode is one and the same thing, but expressed in two ways.[8]

As is well-known, for Spinoza, "the order and connexion of ideas is the same as the order and connexion of things".[9] The fact that thought and extension are two attributes of the unique substance guarantees their correspondence. Thereby, according to Plekhanov, Spinoza agreed with the basic principle of materialistic monism: "laws of being are at the same time laws of thought". [1917b, p.673][10] The psycho-physical parallelism, that Plekhanov seemed to share, raised however perplexity and bewilderment among his contemporaries themselves. A few years after Plekhanov's death, Lunacharsky wrote that Plekhanov's conception of it had been essentially faithful to Spinoza's own 'spirit'.[11] In contrast Valentinov, at the beginning of the century, had pointed out a basic ambiguity: while Spinoza overcame the dualism of spirit and matter by reducing both of them to a single substance, Plekhanov only sporadically and casually reduced them to nature. More often he "makes experience monistic by reducing phenomena to matter as to the *primary factor*."[12]

It is actually quite difficult to judge the coherence of Plekhanov's 'parallelism' since he never systematically presented his opinions on Spinoza's thought. Moreover the interpretation of Spinoza in Soviet philosophy has often been held hostage by other issues, such as during the debate between Mechanists and Deborinites, when both appealed to Plekhanov's authority, and later, when the party's philosophical leadership condemned both of them.[13] In each case, Spinoza's thought became entangled in ideological disputes and polemics. It is therefore all the harder to reconstruct and assess Plekhanov's interpretation.

It is certain, however, that Plekhanov considered 'psycho-physical parallelism' a necessary consequence of any correct monistic view of the being-thought relationship. Having rejected their identity, one could not but understand them as different but corresponding aspects of the same process. In Feuerbach's words: "What *to me or subjectively* is a purely spiritual, immaterial, insensible act, is *in itself objectively* a material, sensible act."[14] Plekhanov went so far in sharing Spinoza's 'parallelism' as to support the latter's theory of the "animation of matter". Spinoza had maintained that all individuals are animated, though to different degrees.[15] According to Plekhanov, if 'thinking' was a function of organized matter, in order to account for its appearing at a certain degree of organization one had to suppose that all matter possessed a certain, more or less developed, 'psychical' property. [1898b, pp.353-356] That is the materialists' reply to what Stern pointed out as their 'Achille's heel': their difficulty in explaining "how, in the animal cell, sensation (the basic mental element) suddenly appears

like a pistol-shot".[16] Many commentators have actually deemed Plekhanov a convinced hylozoist. In particular, P.N. Lepesinskij recalled that Plekhanov once told him:

> Thought is a complex movement and it arises from the elements of movement that also determine the energy status of a stone. And if one wants to see "thought" as a substantial property of matter, then one is compelled to attribute the same property to the stone as well.[17]

It was probably during his polemic against Jacob Stern that Plekhanov had to face the problem clearly. All through his life, however, he had been concerned with hylozoism, or "naive *materialism*", as he called it. [1908a, p.124] His notebooks testify, for instance, to a certain interest in Giordano Bruno, although this left no trace in Plekhanov's published works.[18]

From his 'correct' ontology, Spinoza could draw a theory of knowledge which, in Plekhanov's opinion, made a fundamental contribution to the development of materialist thought. Plekhanov was especially interested in Spinoza's 'first kind' of knowledge. Since he thought the theory of sensation was the foundation of any epistemology, he thought deeply about Spinoza's concept of imagination: it was to the imagination, indeed, that Spinoza referred sensible perception and associative memory; it was the imagination that comprehended any immediate knowledge, since it was there that mind underwent the action of the object.[19] Plekhanov would have probably agreed with Spinoza also in deeming that human reason properly knows things "as necessary", since he thought that conceptual (and dialectical) knowledge provided humanity with a 'reproduction' of objective processes conforming to laws. But Plekhanov rarely showed his interest in Spinoza's 'second kind' of knowledge and never dwelled upon this subject.[20]

Judging from Plekhanov's marginalia and remarks, he was particularly concerned with the part that "the affections of the body" play in Spinoza's thought. For Spinoza, indeed, the human mind knows itself, its corresponding body and any external object solely through the ideas of the affections of its own body.[21] To Plekhanov this sounded like an important acknowledgment of the truth and validity of his own sensualism. Moreover, Spinoza thought the 'image', i.e. the representation of a body excited by external stimuli, did not 'reproduce' the figure of the body itself, but corresponded to it. Plekhanov, of course, considered Spinoza's view to be very close to his own 'hieroglyphic' understanding of sensible perception. Spinoza wrote:

> All the ways in which a body is affected by another body follow at the same time from the nature of the affected body and from the nature of the modifying body, so that the same one body moves in different ways because of the difference in nature of the moving bodies, and vice versa different bodies are moved in different ways by the same one body.[22]

In passages like this Plekhanov could find striking, albeit superficial, analogies with Sečenov's views or with Müller's "theory of the specific energy of nerves". Those who, like Plekhanov, thought that a 'correct' theory of knowledge should found itself on the results of the natural sciences could consider even superficial analogies as evidence of Spinoza's 'naturalism', if not real 'materialism'. Plekhanov was not the only one to interpret Spinoza in this way: at the end of the 1890's Jacob Stern pointed out Wundt's physiology as an empirical confirmation of Spinozian psycho-physical parallelism.[23]

Finally, from the standpoint of naturalistic psychology, which at that time had led to a physiological interpretation of Kant's *a priori*, Spinoza's views closely recalled some features of 'criticism'. While presenting Spinoza's philosophy, Stern himself went so far as to maintain that the distinction between thing-in-itself and phenomenon had already been clearly expressed by Spinoza and that therefore "Spinozism is the real *critical* philosophy".[24] As for Plekhanov, his *N.B.* mark next to Stern's words shows that he had read them attentively. It seems reasonable to suppose that he basically agreed with them, too.[25] Plekhanov, indeed, often jotted down the name of Kant on the pages of Spinoza's *Ethics*. Some of Spinoza's statements actually expressed, according to Plekhanov, a sort of *ante litteram* critical philosophy. Spinoza wrote, for instance:

> The idea of any way in which the human body is affected by external bodies, must imply at the same time the nature of both the human body and the external one. ... The ideas we have about external bodies show the constitution of our body rather than the nature of external bodies.[26]

In Plekhanov's opinion anything interesting and correct that Kant was supposed to have found, i.e. that we know external objects solely in relation to their acting on us, [1927, p.340] had already been stated not only by the French eighteenth-century materialists, but by Spinoza before them. Thereby Plekhanov strengthened the image of a 'materialist' Spinoza: according to this interpretation, not only did Spinoza correctly outline the relationship between thought and being, in spite of the fetters of theology, he also went on to draw suitable

epistemological conclusions, which were to be confirmed by both the further development of philosophical thought and the latest scientific discoveries.

III. THE EIGHTEENTH-CENTURY MATERIALISTS

If Spinozism was very meaningful to Plekhanov as an authoritative confirmation of his own theories, eighteenth-century materialism was most important in the genesis of Plekhanov's own thought. As early as 1885, Plekhanov showed he had reflected on the materialism and sensualism of Condillac and Helvétius, [1934, pp.167-168] and in the early 1890's he declared that he greatly valued Marx' and Engels' writings on the French materialists. In 1892 he translated and published the pages of *Die heilige Familie* on this topic. [Appendix to *Ludwig Feuerbach*, 1892] and a few months later he wrote to Engels: "The clearer I make my ideas on eighteenth-century French materialism, the more I admire the pages you wrote on this subject in your work *Ludwig Feuerbach*." [1893.III.25] All through his life Plekhanov so often and enthusiastically referred to the eighteenth-century materialists, that Bogdanov could call him "Holbachian" during their theoretical debate at the beginning of the century.[27] In his very first 'letter' to Bogdanov, Plekhanov therefore explained his attitude toward eighteenth-century materialism:

> I admire this rich theory, so various in its contents and bright in its forms, not less than Engels did, but I, like Engels, understand that, since the great days of this theory, natural science has gone far ahead and we cannot nowadays share the physical, chemical and biological views of Holbach himself. [1908c, p.223]

Hence Plekhanov explained his obstinate defence of eighteenth-century materialism as a reaction to his opponents' no less obstinate denigration of the theoretical value of this philosophical trend. Since "the adversaries of materialism ... considered the eighteenth century as its golden age", [*ibid.* p.215] while polemicizing against them, Plekhanov felt compelled to side with the party under attack.

Plekhanov was right to a certain extent: his polemical intention of rejecting any interpretation of materialism that considered it a crude and vulgar theory actually influenced his own understanding of the English and French eighteenth-century philosophers. If Lange wrote that "materialism insists on taking the world of senses for the real world",[28]

Plekhanov claimed the materialists had worked out a much more insightful theory of knowledge. Polemics apart, however, Plekhanov appreciated eighteenth-century materialism much more substantially than he dared to admit to . All through his life Plekhanov has been interested in the French materialists' physical, ethical, and political views. Here, of course, we shall dwell mainly upon his reflections on their theory of knowledge.

Plekhanov once declared with some irony that their epistemology did not interest him at all. He wrote:

> Maybe my readers will find that I dwell in not enough length on the theory of knowledge of the thinkers discussed here. I can reply that I did my best in giving a precise account of their views on this subject. But since I do not reckon myself among the supporters of the nowadays so fashionable *Erkenntniskritisch*[29] scholasticism, I had no intention of lingering over this absolutely secondary problem. [1896, p.35]

This passage must however be understood as an expression of Plekhanov's ongoing polemic against neo-Kantianism. Actually he very often referred to the eighteenth-century materialists' theories of knowledge, going so far as to ackowledge that his own epistemology was very close to Priestley's. [1908c, p.214]

Although in his general remarks Plekhanov took eighteenth-century materialism as a whole, he was well aware that it was a by no means homogeneous trend. For example, English materialists differed from French ones because they believed in the existence of an immaterial being. This concept did not keep them from sharing the 'correct' materialist views on the soul-body relationship, however. [1934, p.167] Among French materialists themselves, some referred to English sensualism, while others turned Descartes' speculation into anti-metaphysical views. [1897d, p.264; 1927, p.338] According to Plekhanov, the Cartesian philosophical system, indeed, might easily be understood from a materialistic standpoint: although Descartes was an idealist as regards his theory of the two substances, as a physicist and author of *The Passions of Soul* he suggested a mechanistic handling of spiritual phenomena. Locke's criticism of innatism and distinction between primary and secondary qualities, which Berkeley took to idealistic lengths, led to materialism in Diderot and d'Holbach. [1899]

All these philosophers, few of whom had ever been conscious or consistent materialists, shared a common feature in their psychology: all of them maintained that in order to explain psychological phenomena, it was not necessary to suppose an immaterial or spiritual principle existing within man. As Locke himself had acknowledged, matter itself

could possess the faculty of thinking. [1896, p.39] D'Holbach's following simple remark seemed very compelling to Plekhanov:

> since man, who is matter and has ideas only about matter, enjoys the faculty of thinking, matter can think or is susceptible to that particular modification we call "thought".[30]

Moreover, as Priestley had written, "a philosopher supposes no more *causes* than are necessary to explain *effects*".[31] Hence, although eighteenth-century thinkers could not very easily explain exactly how thinking 'rises' from the brain, there was no reason to suppose a spiritual cause, which would have complicated the problem instead of solving it. Making a comparison, Plekhanov found "interesting", Priestley wrote:

> We are not ... in the least able to conceive how it is that a magnet attracts iron; but having observed, that it never fails to do so, we conclude that, though we do not see the *proximate cause*, or *how* the attraction is effected, the magnet nevertheless *has* that power, and must cease to be a magnet before it can lose it.[32]

Since everyone could observe that sensation and thought unfailingly appeared at a certain degree of material organization, and nobody had ever known them to be separated from matter itself, Priestley concluded that "we have no reason to suppose that they *can* be separated".[33]

Plekhanov could not but appreciate what seemed to be a 'correct' explanation of human mental activity on the grounds of corporal organization, without referring to any spiritual principle. Moreover, the eighteenth-century materialists acknowledged perception as something specific and irreducible to the basic physical property of matter, movement. In Plekhanov's words: perception was 'correctly' considered "*not as movement, but as the internal status of a moving body*". [1906b, p.444][34]

Finally, Plekhanov shared the eighteenth-century materialists' sensualism. Unlike Lange, who thought phenomenalism, which is proper to any consistent sensualism, contradicted the basic principles of materialism, Plekhanov considered sensualism as an inseparable correlate of any 'correct' materialism. He wrote: "[Dogmatic materialists] have never stated that we have any other means of knowing things-in-themselves besides the actions they exert on our external senses. [1898c, p.406] The fact that the impressions which things excite were not identical to the objective properties of things themselves, bothered Plekhanov much less than it did neo-Kantian historians of

philosophy, who considered it a striking contradiction within materialism. Plekhanov thought that materialists had been used to distinguishing between essence and phenomenon long before Kant had 'discovered' it and his followers had made it the banner of critical philosophy. [1892, p.478; 1895a, p.513] The comparison Plekhanov made between eighteenth-century materialism and Kant's critical philosophy is probably the most compelling aspect of his understanding of the former, at least as far as the theory of knowledge is concerned. Soviet commentators have often criticized Plekhanov for having gone so far as to consider eighteenth-century materialism as an anticipation of critical philosophy.[35] Actually Plekhanov himself limited the significance of some of his statements, acknowledging he had gone that far solely because of his polemic against the neo-Kantians. Writing to Ljubov' Aksel'rod he stated:

> If I told Bernstein that materialists sometimes expressed themselves "*völlig im Sinne Kants*", that was just *ironical*; materialists did not deny the possibility of knowing the external world, while a Kantian *must* deny it. [1899]

Plekhanov's own notations however testify that he held fast to the interpretation of eighteenth-century materialism outlined above, even when he had no intention of being ironic or polemicizing against anybody. For instance, he considered the Kantian concept of *Ding an sich* analogous to Priestley's idea of 'substance' or 'essence', i.e. the unknown *quid* which we are forced to suppose as the ground for known and knowable properties, as Locke had taught. Priestley wrote, for instance:

> the term 'substance', or 'essence' ... is, in fact, nothing more than a help to expression, as we may say, but not at all to conception. ... We cannot speak of attraction and repulsion, for example, but as powers belonging to, and residing in some thing, substance, or essence, but our ideas do not go beyond these powers.

Plekhanov found these passages to be a good definition of the real concept of *Ding an sich*.[36] Moreover, Plekhanov agreed with Priestley's understanding of "what had properly to be understood by the word 'knowledge'". [1905b, p.480] According to Priestley, "a definition of any particular thing, substance, or being (call it what you will) cannot be anything more than an enumeration of its known properties".[37] For Plekhanov, too, if one abstracted from the properties of the object, nothing else remained but a name, a mere convention. It was therefore natural that the *substratum* turned out to be unknowable:

to know meant exactly to know the properties of the things as they showed themselves in our sensory perceptions and in our representations built upon the latter. In comparing Kant's 'thing-in-itself' and the materialists' 'essence', Plekhanov therefore confirmed Hegel's critique of noumenon.

To conclude, Plekhanov may have harshly pointed out the eighteenth-century materialists' grave 'faults', such as their acceptance of 'metaphysical' conceptions, which were devoid of any idea of evolution and development, [1896, p.43] and which thereby made it impossible for them to perform a 'genetic' analysis of knowledge itself, rather than referring to an unchangeable and eternal 'human nature'. But he shared their attitude towards psychological and epistemological problems, thinking that here they had expressed the basic principles of modern materialism. From this standpoint Feuerbach, whom Plekhanov considered the real forerunner of Marxian epistemology, was merely "the restorer of eighteenth-century materialism". [1898b, p.357]

IV. THE NON-MATERIALISTS' CONTRIBUTION: KANT AND THE GERMAN IDEALISTS

Though mainly concerned with the history of materialism, Plekhanov thought a few non-materialist philosophers deserved his interest, if not his admiration. First among these was, of course, Kant. As is known, Plekhanov was compelled to deal with Kantianism and therefore to clearly expose his understanding of Kant's thought, while polemicizing against German revisionism. This endeavor has received conflicting assessments from subsequent commentators. Most Soviet scholars have followed Lenin, who accused Plekhanov of having started from "a vulgar-materialistic, rather than from a dialectical-materialistic point of view", since he had "rejected" Kant instead of "correcting" him;[38] others have thought Plekhanov entirely dominated by Kantianism and deeply influenced by its agnosticism; there were even Mechanists of the 1920's, who considered Plekhanov's understanding of Kant to be exemplary.[39] Certainly Plekhanov's was a well-informed reading, and, while polemicizing against revisionism, he proved he had attentively read Kant's works. In the *Dom Plekhanova* Library the few books by Kant clearly show the traces of Plekhanov's serious analysis, often repeated over the years.[40] Plekhanov, however, had always viewed Kant suspiciously. "Dangerous old man", he called Kant in one of his letters to Ljubov' Aksel'rod, in which he also declared he had always been convinced it was necessary "to treat him badly". [1902.II] For

Plekhanov Kant's dangerousness consisted essentially in his separating the realm of faith from the realm of knowledge. As a new version of the theory of double truth, Kantianism "let ideologists of the ruling class be *materialist in science* and at the same time to hold to *idealism* in the realm of those concepts that are declared to lie beyond the limits of scientific knowledge." [1916, p.628][41] Kantian dualism turned out to be as 'useful' to the bourgeoisie in ethics since it allowed them to build the most seductive ideals, without being really anxious to put them into practice. [1891, pp.448-449][42] Born as *ancilla fidei*, as Plekhanov defined it in his unpublished notes,[43] Kant's philosophy was historically the *ancilla* of the bourgeoisie. Plekhanov therefore concluded Marxists had to fight against it especially when, through the revisionism of the 1890's, it jeopardized Marxist orthodoxy within social democracy itself.

According to Plekhanov, Kantianism was merely "a timid acknowledgment of materialism and, at the same time, a timid acknowledgment of idealism". [1899] In Kant's theory of knowledge Plekhanov singled out two different aspects:

> a subjective *idealistic* element: the form of our contemplation or thinking, of our knowledge in general; ... a *realistic* element: that indeterminate material that noumena provide us with and our consciousness transforms. [1892, p.477]

Hesitating between the two aspects of his theory, Kant seemed to Plekhanov at times more of an 'idealist', as in the first edition of the *Critique of Pure Reason*, and at times more of a 'realist', as in the *Prolegomena* and in the second edition of the *Critique*, whose 'Confutation of Idealism' Plekhanov particularly appreciated, [1898c, pp.409-11; 1899] wholly disregarding the fact that it was in the second edition that Kant developed his concept of noumenon as *Grenzbegriff*. Moreover, Plekhanov emphasized the importance of Kant's *Declaration on Fichte's "Science of Knowledge"*, where Kant refused to accept the idealistic development of his own thought.[44]

On the one hand, Kant did not and could not acknowledge the existence of the 'material world' independently of the subject. According to him, Plekhanov noted, "*this* world is just a phenomenon, that, as such, cannot exist outside consciousness." [1938c, p.52] On the other hand, however, Kant, like any materialist, stated that external objects do exist and they are independent of our consciousness. In the *Prolegomena* he wrote:

> My doctrine cannot be called idealistic just because I find that *all the*

> *properties making up the intuition of a body* belong solely to its phenomenon; this is not at all to deny, as it is in real idealism, the reality of the appearing thing. It merely shows that we cannot know it as it is in itself through our senses.[45]

Plekhanov could not but assent to this statement. For him too, external things were knowable only through the sensations that they excite within us, which are never identical with the corresponding objective properties. According to Plekhanov, Kant was very close to his own view, thinking that

> sensation, and therefore the image of the object, is the resultant of two forces: the properties of the object, which provoke a certain impression in us, and the properties of the receiver who gets those impressions, the properties of our "I", which groups them in a certain way, which, so to say, arranges and ties them together *in conformity with its own nature.* [1892, p.476]

If one understands these 'properties' of the subject's nature to mean his 'physiological properties', i.e. the functions of the neuro-psychological organization of the human organism, Kant's theory turns out to be very close to Secenov and Plekhanov's 'materialist' epistemology itself.

Although Plekhanov himself felt compelled to declare in his correspondence to Ljubov' Aksel'rod: "I cannot confess I am in any way a Kantian", [1899] it is not surprising that his contemporaries and post-revolutionary commentators sometimes considered Plekhanov's epistemology to be an eclectic mixture of both materialism and Kantianism. Actually Plekhanov never denied that he shared Kantian phenomenalism; he rather insisted that the real difference between materialism and Kantianism consisted in their separate interpretations of the *Ding an sich.* According to the materialists, the thing-in-itself was knowable and known through its action on our senses and our knowledge was quite enough for the fulfillment of our practical aims; there was therefore no more room for 'theological' fantasy. In contrast, "all the ghosts - God, immortal souls, free will - that do not get along together with the idea of conformity to law, *can* take refuge" in the unknowable world of Kantian noumena. [1892, p.477]

Plekhanov was sincerely convinced that not only did his epistemology share nothing with Kantianism except what had already been stated by Spinoza and the eighteenth-century materialists, but also that it represented the only outcome for anyone who, moving from Kantianism, was looking for consistency and a sound foundation. The traces of Kantianism which Plekhanov's contemporaries pointed out within his own thought must therefore be considered not as arising from

any direct influence of Kant's thought on Plekhanov, but rather as the consequence of Kantian aspects in Sečenov's (through Helmholtz) and Spencer's views on the *a priori*, in which Plekhanov was very interested.

Wavering between idealism and realism, noumenon and phenomenon, faith and knowledge, in Plekhanov's opinion, Kantianism paid for its dualism with unavoidable contradictions.[46] In his polemic against Konrad Schmidt, Plekhanov argued that Kant's conviction that phenomena are "the representations [things] provoke in us by acting on our senses"[47] was to be considered as a *contradictio in adjecto*: the noumenon could not be the *cause* of anything, since the category of *causality* could only be applied within the phenomenal world.

A few years later, evolutionism, a theory that Plekhanov considered to be asserting its authority in every field of science, exposed other faults of Kantianism. On this subject Paul Beck had emphasized the importance of 'genetic' analysis of knowledge, acknowledging, at the same time, that it was impossible to carry it out from a Kantian standpoint. He wrote (in a passage that Plekhanov appreciated):

> For Kant, the soul was a given quantity, unchangeable in its elements. For him it was solely a question of determining its *a priori* properties and drawing all the others therefrom, but not of demonstrating the genesis of these properties. In contrast, if we move from the axiom that man has developed himself from a cell of protoplasm, we must draw from the elementary living manifestations of the cell what for Kant was the basis of "the whole world of phenomena".[48]

For Plekhanov as well, Kantianism was wholly incompatible with evolutionism. Any development, indeed, happened within time, but if time was just a subjective form of experience, and nothing objective corresponded to it, it was impossible to state that anything developed 'before' or would develop 'after' the subject. Even if one extended the idea of 'subject' to comprehend the whole of mankind, one could not get over this difficulty. In this case

> *either* other people exist only *within my representation* and in this case they have not been before me and they will not be after my death; *or* they exist *outside me* and independently of my consciousness, ... then that "*outside me*" obviously is what presents itself to me as *space* thanks to the structure of my brain. ... If people have lived *before me* and will live *after me*, then these

> "*before me*" and "*after me*" obviously correspond to some "*an sich*", which does not depend on my consciousness and just reflects itself in my consciousness in the form of time. [1905b, p.484]

If any theory of development presupposed the objective existence of space and time - or, at least, of 'something' corresponding to them, - Plekhanov concluded - it could not coexist with Kant's transcendental idealism.[49]

According to Plekhanov, therefore, Kant's basic dualism led not only to serious internal contradictions, but also to an insuperable inadequacy as regards contemporary natural sciences, which was especially bad since Plekhanov thought a 'correct' theory of knowledge had to agree with the results of contemporary psycho-physiology and biology.

In order to get over such difficulties, Plekhanov argued, Kant would have had to give up his dualism. By admitting that noumena are knowable, he would have become a consistent realist; by finally relating the materialistic 'residual' of the thing-in-itself, the 'source' of our knowledge to the subject, he would have turned into a consistent idealist. In the former case, Kantianism would have become as 'materialistic' as Spinoza, eighteenth-century materialists, and Feuerbach were. In the latter case, Kantianism would have mixed itself up with Fichte's subjective idealism and would have suffered all the problems implied in it as well, first of all the deduction of the multiplicity of individuals. [1899a, p.431; 1905b, p.484]

By trying to avoid the contradictions that Kantian dualism necessarily implied, in Plekhanov's opinion, neo-Kantians ended up by leaning towards one of the two alternatives that Kantianism itself had presented. On the one hand, Lasswitz rejected the idea of noumenon as the 'cause' of phenomenon, thereby unconsciously rejecting Kant himself and coming closer to Fichte's subjective idealism; [1898c, p.410][50] on the other hand, Alois Riehl considered the thing-in-itself to be absolutely real: [1899]

> some ... are better disposed towards Fichtianism, others ... towards materialism, but neither of them has the theoretical courage necessary to understand the meaning of their own tendencies. [*loc.cit.*]

Since, according to Plekhanov it was possible to overcome Kantian contradictions only by giving up Kantian dualism itself, i.e. by embracing monism, it was to the idealists' credit that they had finally done it. Plekhanov wrote:

> Idealism undoubtedly has one thing in common with materialism: a yearning for a *monistic* explanation of phenomena. But the *method*, whereby this yearning is expressed *within materialism, is diametrically opposite* to the method of its inclusion within *idealism*. [1901b, p.385]

Convinced that the German Idealists had thereby made a decisive contribution to the development of materialist conceptions themselves, by rescuing materialists from their 'metaphysical' stasis through a 'correct' evolutionary and dialectical view of reality, [1899b, pp.482-484] Plekhanov had studied their works since the end of the 1880's and he was soon considered an authority within international social democracy: it was he, who in 1891 celebrated the anniversary of Hegel's death with an article in *Die Neue Zeit*. [1891]

It is obvious that among the German Idealists, Plekhanov's preference was for the one whom Marx himself had considered his own master, the modern 'discoverer' of dialectic. On Hegel's philosophy Plekhanov wrote:

> it has been the focus where all the results of the preceding activity of philosophical thinking gathered together and whence came the rays which illuminated the way of the intellectual and moral development of civilized world. [1899b, p.482]

Hegel deeply influenced the genesis and development of Plekhanov's epistemology; first through his criticism of the Kantian thing-in-itself, and later by distinguishing between property and quality, form and law, which Plekhanov studied with particular care while revising his theory of knowledge at the beginning of the century. However, in dealing with the history of philosophy and the role that German Idealism played within it, Plekhanov often considered the general features of the philosophical trend, as a whole, placing particular emphasis on their monistic ontology.

Fichte, of course, represented a sort of exception: although he was a monist too, Plekhanov regarded his thought just as the coherent idealistic version of Kantianism. Fichte overcame the Kantian dualism between subject and object simply by reducing non-I to I, nature to self-awareness. [1917b, pp.668-669] This solution, however, could not clearly define the relationship between 'finite I' and 'infinite I'; neither could it escape an unavoidable solipsism. [1908d, pp. 256-257]

By contrast, Plekhanov appreciated Schelling's thought, especially his ethical considerations about the relationship between liberty and necessity,[51] his ontology and theory of knowledge. Schelling's Absolute was, indeed, a 'correct' monistic principle: an undifferentiated

unity of subject and object, in which both have their origin and foundation. Materialistic monism merely overturned that subject-object into "object-subject".[52] Plekhanov wrote: "[According to Schelling,] eternal nature (*natura naturans*) is spirit, while according to us it is matter, capable of feeling and perceiving, i.e. also of knowing itself, if it likes to."[53] By 'overturning' Schelling's Absolute, one turned matter into the unity of thought and being, subject and object, a sort of Spinozist substance, the ontological foundation of the correspondence between modes of thought and modes of extension, between perceptions and movements.

In Plekhanov's opinion it was Hegel, however, who made idealistic monism fully consistent. He, indeed, overcame the dualistic residue in Schelling's system, where the Absolute was located outside nature and outside consciousness.

> According to Hegel, *not only* is world *rooted* in the absolute, *but it is also in the latter*. The world is the totality of nature and spirit. The development of the world is the development of the absolute, its revelation. [1917b, p.669]

It was precisely Hegel's insistence on the dialectical development of reality that was, for Plekhanov, his most valued contribution to the evolution of materialism, since Hegel's dialectic proved to be the only method capable of knowing reality, that was no longer conceived as made up of single, fixed things, but of processes and changes. [1901b, pp.377-378] According to Plekhanov, "Hegel's point of view is *the point of view of development*". [1899b, p.484] From this standpoint Hegel could account for both the genesis and disappearance of phenomena within reality. Plekhanov therefore agreed with Herzen that Hegel's philosophy might be called the "algebra of revolution".[54]

In Plekhanov's understanding, however, the insuperable limitation of all the idealists, Hegel included, consisted in their identifying the absolute with spirit. Plekhanov, therefore, thought their monism could not really solve the fundamental question of the relationship between subject and object: although unwillingly, idealists ended up by removing the second term of the problem, by finally reducing being or nature, to thinking or self-awareness. Plekhanov recalled:

> Both [Schelling and Hegel] criticized Spinoza, who, according to them, could not rise from the concept of *substance* to the concept of *consciousness*. Spinoza's substance, however, having two attributes - thought and extension -, had this advantage, that it was really subject-object, unity of thinking and being. [1917b, p.670]

According to Plekhanov, it was to Feuerbach's credit that he went back to Spinoza's monism, by criticizing idealism.

V. LUDWIG FEUERBACH

Since the 1890's Plekhanov turned to Feuerbach as the thinker who had "restored" materialism in philosophy, by ridding it of idealism forever. [1890, p.79] According to Plekhanov, Feuerbach's critique of Hegelian idealism was incontrovertible:

> Feuerbach found out that Hegel's philosophy eliminated the contradiction between being and thought, Kant had expressed with particular vividness. But, in Feuerbach's opinion, it eliminated this contradiction while *remaining inside it*, i.e. inside *one of its elements*, namely *thought* ... . It follows that Hegel - and idealism in general - only eliminates this contradiction *by eliminating one of its constituent elements, i.e. being, matter, nature.* [1908a, p.133]

Plekhanov agreed with Feuerbach's criticism. To him Feuerbach was the philosopher who, finally aware of the limitations of idealistic monism, had turned to real being, to concrete corporeality. Feuerbach had written:

> Hegel starts from being, or rather from the concept of being or from abstract being, so why should I not start from being itself, from real being?[55]

By 'correctly' solving the basic ontological problem, [1908a, pp.133-136; 1897e, p.441] according to Plekhanov, Feuerbach came closer to Spinoza and the eighteenth-century materialists. Plekhanov, therefore, considered Feuerbach the last and best product of the whole of pre-Marxian materialism, linking historical materialism to the preceding philosophical tradition:

> Feuerbach's "*humanism*" itself turns out to be nothing but Spinozism, ridden of its theological appendages. Exactly the point of view ... Marx and Engels went over to, as they broke with idealism. [1908a, p.135]

In particular, Plekhanov considered Marxian epistemology to be very

close to Feuerbach's. He went so far as to maintain:

> Marx' epistemology comes straight from Feuerbach's or, if you like, is Feuerbach's, just made more profound by Marx' brilliant correction. [*ibid.* p.137]

It is therefore essential to go through Plekhanov's interpretation of Fuerbach's epistemology and to clarify what, according to Plekhanov, Marx' attitude towards it was.

In his *Theses for a Reformation of Philosophy*, Feuerbach had already stated what for Plekhanov was the basic principle of materialism: "Being is the subject, thought is the predicate. Thought comes from being, but not being from thought".[56] The prevailing idealism, however, had misunderstood Feuerbach, as it had Spinoza, going so far as to exclude him from 'real materialism' and to consider his 'humanism', as Lange did, to be "the philosophy of the spirit in the form of a philosophy of the senses".[57] Once more Plekhanov took it upon himself to rewrite an important chapter in the history of philosophy, which he thought idealist historians did not or could not really understand.

For Plekhanov, 'humanism' was mere the methodological procedure Feuerbach chose in order "to work out a correct view on matter in general and its relationship with the 'spirit'". [1908a, p.131] Feuerbach chose man as the starting point for his search, since it was precisely in man that the unity of being and thought found its concrete foundation. As Feuerbach wrote in his *Principles*: "the unity of thought and being is meaningful and true, only if man is conceived as the foundation and subject of this unity."[58] Plekhanov attached a wholly materialistic meaning to these statements: man was the place where subject and object, being and thought were unified, since "he himself is nothing but a material being owning the faculty of thinking". [*ibid.* p.143] But if man was such a being, Plekhanov concluded, the contradiction of the two terms was overcome within man without any reduction, while idealists merely deluded themselves into thinking that they could solve it by reducing being to thought. Within man, being and thought, matter and spirit did really come together, making him a real "subject-object". [*loc.cit.*] Feuerbach had written: "I am an 'I' to myself, but at the same time I am a 'you' to somebody else".[59] Plekhanov could not but agree with his master in considering the subjectivity of 'I' and the objectivity of 'you' as corresponding aspects of the same individual. It is also clear why Plekhanov considered Feuerbach's thought to be a further development of Spinoza's monism, thereby agreeing with Chernyshevsky.[60]

Moreover, Feuerbach's materialist solution to the basic

epistemological problem was closely connected with his acknowledging a central role for sensibility in the process of knowing. Feuerbach thought that idealism could lead to nothing precisely because it had tried to draw the origin of ideas from the isolated man, "from the 'I' considered without the 'you' given in the senses".[61] The "old philosophy of the Absolute" had "relegated the senses to the realm of phenomenon, of the finite"; it had chosen as its maxim: "I am an abstract being, an exclusively thinking being, and my body does not belong to my being". The new philosophy on the contrary held to this principle: "I am a real, feeling being and my body does belong to my being, precisely in the sense that my body in its totality is my 'I', my being itself".[62] From this point of view, just by admitting the 'truth' of the senses, by 'ransoming' sensibility from the obscure immediacy the idealists had reduced it to, it was possible to explain the relationship of being to thought, body to soul. "Only the senses", Feuerbach stated, "can solve the mystery of this reciprocal action".[63]

Sensibility, indeed, is what puts man in contact with the natural world of which he is part; through feeling, man realizes the objectivity of the external world as he perceives the actions of objects on himself, as he changes from active into passive, i.e. object. Feuerbach wrote: "You can rise up to the object just if you debase yourself to be object to someone else ..., you feel just as far as you are sensible yourself." Plekhanov greatly appreciated this passage: "extremely important" he called it in his notes.[64] According to Plekhanov sensibility is the only reliable foundation for knowledge of the external world. He could not but agree with Feuerbach: "Only the senses, and not thought by itself, provide us with the object in its real meaning."[65]

One of Feuerbach's aphorisms reads:

> The conflict and opposition between materialism and idealism does not arise between matter and spirit, body and soul, but between feeling and thinking; since sensation is wholly materialistic and corporeal, as the ancients had already stated.[66]

Since Feuerbach had always defended the importance of feeling, Plekhanov thought he had good reason to consider Feuerbach to be a wholly consistent materialist.

Plekhanov did, however, recognize that Feuerbach had very often expressed his doubts about materialism itself. Unlike contemporary 'physiologists', such as Moleschott, he thought that "materialism is the foundation of the building of human essence and science, but it is not the building itself."[67] Feuerbach especially blamed those 'physiologists' for reducing thought to a mere action of the human brain, which was wholly wrong and useless, since "once *thought* is said to be an activity

of the brain, nothing is said about *what* thought is."[68] Actually the brain was just a "*physiological abstraction*", an organ which, as such, performed its functions just as long as it was connected with the rest of the organism, but could explain nothing by itself.[69]

Plekhanov thought such objections were wholly justified against Vogt's and Moleschott's materialism, but he believed it was wrong to extend them to materialism in general. [1897e, pp.442-443; 1909e, pp.233-234] According to Plekhanov, no materialist simply reduced mental activity to the brain by identifying sensation with its organic presuppositions. From Feuerbach's remarks Plekhanov therefore concluded that his master knew little of the history of materialism, but he never doubted that Feuerbach had really been a materialist himself. [1897e, *loc.cit.*]

Feuerbach had also written: "Truth is neither materialism, nor idealism, neither physiology, nor psychology, truth is just anthropology."[70] Plekhanov objected, writing in one of his notebooks: "Why not physiology? The brain does not think and feel. Why?". Further, recalling Feuerbach's statement that the brain is just a "*physiological abstraction*", Plekhanov concluded: "his physiological and anatomical remarks are far from being always well-founded".[71] Plekhanov thought that Feuerbach, apart from his polemic against the 'physiological materialists', actually attributed a very important role to physiology. Hoping that philosophy and natural sciences would join together, Feuerbach, indeed, included physiology within the new "universal science" of anthropology.[72] If man, according to Feuerbach, was essentially a body, i.e. a natural organism, Plekhanov concluded, he had first of all to be studied as such. Thought itself had therefore to be understood as a material activity and, wholly consistently, Feuerbach had pointed to the definition of the relationship between thought and brain as "the greatest triumph of the human spirit."[73]

In this manner, Plekhanov concluded that, according to Feuerbach, "the organism is the subject, and thinking is a property ('predicate') of this subject". [1909e, p.238] As a matter of fact Feuerbach had written that thought is not "the cause of human being, but only ... a consequence and a necessary property", that "thought is the 'predicate' of being".[74] Plekhanov however understood these statements to have 'physiological' implications that Feuerbach had certainly not envisaged: Plekhanov's careless substitution of the term 'predicate' for 'property' made thought a sort of bio-physiological property of being, namely of the human organism. Plekhanov connected the idea of the non-identical unity of subject and object in man, on the one hand with August Forel's "psycho-physiological theory of identity", [1908a, pp.138-142] and on the other hand with Spinoza's parallelism of mind and body, thought

and extension. [*ibid.* pp.134-135] Psychology and physiology thus became two parallel sciences, both equally engaged in investigating one simultaneously physical and mental process, although from different standpoints. It was precisely in this sense that the Spinozist Jacob Stern had written in a passage which Plekhanov appreciated: "Hunger is considered materialistically as a lack of certain corporal juices, psychologically as a feeling of unsatisfaction; satiety materialistically is the fulfillment of a lack in the organism, psychologically a feeling of pleasure."[75] For Plekhanov it was this simultaneously 'Spinozist' and 'scientistic' concept that Feuerbach handed down to Marxism.

Plekhanov knew of course that Marx and Engels had often criticized Feuerbach: in 1892 his first test as a propagator of 'scientific socialism' in Russia was as the translator of *Ludwig Feuerbach* and Marx' *Theses on Feuerbach.*[76] The criticisms contained in these, however, did not keep Plekhanov from thinking that Marx' materialism, at least in its philosophical roots, was the result of his substantial adherence to Feuerbach's thought and, through the latter, to the whole monistic and materialist tradition that Plekhanov had singled out in the history of philosophy. He went so far as to state that "historical materialism was implied in Feuerbach's materialism, as the acorn is the oak in embryo, *an sich*, to use Hegel's expression." [1910a, p.352] Although Feuerbach still held to idealism in his philosophy of history, in Plekhanov's opinion Marx and Engels developed their historical materialism precisely by applying "to history the basic proposition of Feuerbachian materialism, namely that being is not determined by consciousness ..., but on the contrary consciousness is determined by being". [*loc.cit.*] For Plekhanov therefore, Marx' criticism of Feuerbach was not meant to overturn the latter's materialistic point of view, but to go beyond it, making it more consistent.

In particular, when addressing Marx' attitude toward Feuerbach's theory of knowledge, Plekhanov wrote:

> Feuerbach points out that our *I* only knows *the object, by undergoing its influence.* Marx objects: our *I* knows the object, *by influencing it* ... . Of course, in defence of Feuerbach one may object that in the process of *our influence* on objects we know their properties only in so far as they, in their turn, influence us. In both cases *sensation* precedes *thinking* ... . But Marx did not deny it. For him the point was not that sensation incontestably precedes reflection, but that man is induced to reflect mainly by those sensations he feels in the process of his influencing the external world. Since this influence is imposed on him by his struggle for life, then the theory of knowledge in Marx is closely connected with

> his materialistic view of the cultural history of mankind. [1908a, pp.136-137]

This passage very clearly reveals several essential features of Plekhanov's understanding of both Feuerbach and Marx. According to Plekhanov, Marx' acknowledgment of the central role that praxis plays in knowledge had not been wholly alien to Feuerbach himself. For Plekhanov, Feuerbach had often alluded to the priority of practice as regards theory, though without his most famous follower's profundity and consistency. Feuerbach wrote, for instance:

> The basic fault of idealism is precisely that it only tackled and solved the question of objectivity and subjectivity, reality or unreality of the world from a theoretical point of view, whereas the world originally, from the beginning, is the object of intellect precisely because it is the object of willing, of the will to be and to have.

Plekhanov's notes on this passage testify that he found here "the embryo of Marxian theory" as expressed in Marx' *Theses on Feuerbach*.[77] In accord with Alfred Schmidt, one may therefore conclude that Plekhanov supported, although he never stated it explicitly, the thesis that not only did Feuerbach foreshadow Marx' ideas on the unity of theory and praxis, but that he had already developed them through his own opinions about the unity of epistemology and ethics.[78]

It is undeniable that such a thesis, by considering man as ultimately a single natural, psycho-physiological being, widely disregards the social-historical import of Marxian concept of praxis and it is therefore, if not wrong, at least reductionist. The contrast between Feuerbach's naturalistic and anthropological and Marx' historical materialisms, was, however, very hazy to Plekhanov. As is clear from the passage quoted above, he actually tended to interpret Marxism itself in a 'naturalistic', 'positivist' way: man was first of all to be considered as a biological organism in his relationship with his milieu and the dialectics of social development was to be understood as a result of his "struggle for life". For Plekhanov, as a consequence, one had to use evolutionistic categories in order to explain the basic relationship between man and his environment. It is not surprising, therefore, if Marx' "brilliant correction" to Feuerbach's epistemology turned out to be, in Plekhanov's opinion, a sort of 'historical-evolutionistic' version of the latter.

VI. FEUERBACH IN RUSSIA: NIKOLAJ CHERNYSHEVSKY

Chernyshevsky's philosophy deeply influenced Plekhanov's understanding of Feuerbach and, more generally, his whole philosophy. An outstanding figure in Russian progressive thought, Chernyshevsky was the Russian thinker Plekhanov regarded most highly. From his first article in 1890, [1890] up to his contributions on the 20th anniversary of Chernyshevsky's death, [1909c,d,e; 1910a] to a last article in 1913, [1913] Plekhanov very often dwelled upon Chernyshevsky's thought. Moreover, since 1881, he had set Chernyshevsky among his masters, next to Marx. [1881.X.31][79] Later he openly declared: "My intellectual development was accomplished under Chernyshevsky's profound influence; the analysis of his conceptions has been a great event in my literary life..." [1913, p.408]

According to Plekhanov, it was to Chernyshevsky's credit that he turned to German philosophy just as the Russian progressives were rejecting it as vain metaphysics, preferring more 'concrete' positivism or vulgar materialism. [1890, p.77] If Belinskij had brought Hegel's thought to the knowledge of the Russian democratic intelligentsia, Chernyshevsky helped to spread Feuerbach's philosophy, which, in Plekhanov's opinion, represented the most advanced position that the Russian conditions of that time made possible. [1894a, p.68] For Plekhanov, Chernyshevsky was moving in the direction that was leading to Marxism in Western Europe: like Marx and Engels, he was concerned with Hegelian dialectic. But "the unfavourable conditions of Russian social life prevented our great writer's thought reaching the end of this path, and he stopped at the penultimate stage, i.e. at Feuerbach's philosophy". [1913, p.407]

> [Marx and Engels] *essentially remade Feuerbach's materialism*, - true, having held to his theory of knowledge, for example, to his doctrine on the relation of subject to object, - while Chernyshevsky, generally speaking, merely *expanded his master's views*. [1909c, p.305]

Chernyshevsky himself had stated that the esthetic theory he presented in his dissertation, *The Esthetic Relation of Art to Reality*, merely "applied Feuerbach's fundamental ideas with the aim of solving a few problems that did not come into the master's sphere of inquiry" and spreading Feuerbach's ideas in Russia in the form allowed at that time.[80] Chernyshevsky had become Feuerbach's 'follower' in his youth and had "enthusiastically" read the latter's works "until the necessities of life diverted him from scientific activity",[81] a very discreet euphemism

to mean firstly jail, then deportation. From Siberia, he wrote to his sons:

> Already fifteen years have passed since I last reread Feuerbach ... . Now, of course, I have forgotten everything I knew of him. But in my youth I knew whole pages of his by heart. And, as far as I can judge from my dim memories, I will remain his faithful follower.[82]

Plekhanov, too, thought Chernyshevsky had been Feuerbach's faithful follower, having inherited all his master's good and bad qualities. Just like Feuerbach, Chernyshevsky never applied his materialism to his philosophy of history, [1890, p.88; 1909d, pp.341-342; 1909c, p.311] but he nevertheless maintained 'correct' monistic views on nature and man, being the enemy of idealism and philosophical dualism. In particular, Chernyshevsky had inherited from Feuerbach what Plekhanov defined as "the principle of contemporary *materialistic monism*": [1909c, p.300] the anthropological principle. The title of Chernyshevsky's main philosophical work, *The Anthropological Principle in Philosophy*, clearly showed its close connection with Feuerbach's views, though dissimulated because of the censor. [1890, p.78]

According to Chernyshevsky, the 'anthropological principle' consisted basically in considering human being

> as a single being having only one nature, in order not to divide human life into two halves, each belonging to a different nature, in order to consider every aspect of a man's activity as an activity of his whole organism, from head to foot inclusively, or, if it is the special function of a certain particular organ of the human organism, to consider this organ in its natural connection with the organism as a whole.[83]

Plekhanov thought Chernyshevsky's epistemology, as elaborated primarily during his polemic against his idealist opponents, was the corollary of just such a 'materialistic' principle. [1909c, p.304] Chernyshevsky, indeed, acknowledged that within man there were two 'series' of phenomena, material and 'moral', without reducing each to the other and without stopping at an inconclusive dualism, thereby showing he belonged by right to the tradition of materialistic monism, as Plekhanov understood it. Chernyshevsky thought the distinction between physical and mental, objective and subjective, was merely a useful, conventional subdivision. He wrote:

> every object reveals an incalculable multiplicity of different phenomena, which we, for convenience of judgement, place in

> different classes, calling each class a quality, so that in every object there are many different qualities.[84]

In reality, Chernyshevsky concluded, mental as well as physical phenomena have their roots in the unity of human nature, as proved by the natural sciences themselves. As he pointed out,

> physiology and medicine find that the human organism is a very complex combination of chemicals, that undergoes a very complex chemical process we call 'life'.[85]

Although not much was known about that process yet, one had no reason to attribute any of its manifestations to a hypothetical mental substance. Mental phenomena had therefore to be considered as the results of an activity of the human organism. For Chernyshevsky, as well as for Plekhanov, this did not mean 'reducing' mental to physical, identifing sensation and movement. Charges like these were nevertheless made against Chernyshevsky during the polemic that followed the publication of his article in his journal *Sovremennik*, which Plekhanov attentively reconstructed. [1909e, pp.246-255] To Plekhanov, all those accusations seemed absolutely groundless since Chernyshevsky, in accordance with the whole tradition of materialistic monism, not only did not identify mental and physical, but

> he would have risen against such an identification, because he would rightly have seen in it the unconscious repetition of one of the radical errors of idealism - the sham solution of the antinomy between subject and object through the removal of one of its elements. *[ibid.* p.239]

According to Plekhanov, Chernyshevsky maintained that it was not the idealists' and introspective psychologists' abstract 'I', but a material being, i.e. the human organism, who perceived external objects by feeling their actions on his sense organs. Plekhanov explained it as follows:

> This action consists in the fact that somehow these or those parts of the organism pass into movement. This movement of certain parts of the organism *excites* a certain sensation, but it is *not identical* with sensation: it merely represents *the objective side* of the phenomenon, that appears as sensation *from the subjective side, i.e. to that being, in whom this process of movement takes place.* [*loc.cit.*]

From these positions, Chernyshevsky polemicized in the 1880's against the supporters of the 'critical' theory of knowledge, who, having considered that man knew only his own representations of objects and not the objects themselves, concluded that the latter were different from the former.[86] Although admitting that human knowledge was somehow limited, Chernyshevsky, like Plekhanov, strongly asserted its objectivity:

> Man's cognitive forces are limited, as all his forces. In this sense of the word the character of our knowledge is conditioned by the character of our cognitive forces. If the organs of our senses were more perceptive or our reason stronger, we would know more than we know nowadays and, of course, some of our present knowledge would change ... [However] the essential character of our factual knowledge stays unchanged whatever its increase.[87]

Chernyshevsky's defence of the objectivity of our knowledge ultimately won Plekhanov over. In 1909, during the lively debate on contemporary Western epistemology and Marxism, Plekhanov suggested that laymen should go back to Chernshevsky's polemical article in order to orient themselves within the many contemporary philosophical trends. [1909d, p.340] Plekhanov was sure Chernyshevsky would provide anybody with 'correct' and clear materialistic principles.

> It is easy to understand what elements of Chernyshevsky's views appealed to Plekhanov. In the former's ideas Plekhanov saw the whole history of materialism gathering together: Chernyshevsky had 'restored' the monism of Spinoza, whom he rightly numbered among the few philosophers who had maintained the anthropological principle before Feuerbach, though with a wholly different terminology. [1909c, p.301][88] Chernyshevsky adopted parallelism and the rigorous correspondence that Feuerbach had posited between subject and object. Convinced of the unity and materiality of world, Chernyshevsky understood thought to be a natural property of the organism, of matter at a certain degree of organization and development, like the eighteenth-century materialists. [1909e, pp.251-252]

Moreover, Plekhanov appreciated Chernyshevsky's care in dealing with ontological and epistemological problems from the standpoint of the natural sciences. Even in his idealistic views on history, Chernyshevsky started, according to Plekhanov, from the 'scientific' opinion that "man is an animal, whose organism obeys certain laws of physiology". [*ibid.* p.334] It was that very "undoubtedly materialistic" standpoint that

Plekhanov thought philosophy had to take from science.

Plekhanov however acknowledged that it was precisely from this standpoint that Chernyshevsky worked out his idealistic views on history, in identifying factors 'naturally' favourable or harmful to human progress. [*ibid.* p.310] He also acknowledged the fact that Chernyshevsky sometimes dwelled on a 'metaphysical' conception of human nature in his esthetic theories. [1897e, pp.461-465] For Plekhanov, it was clear that Chernyshevsky could not really account for any 'process' or 'development': not only did he not develop a materialistic philosophy of history, he also failed to grasp the meaning of Darwin's evolutionism, both of which Plekhanov considered to be Chernyshevsky's 'failures'. [1909e, pp.279-287]

In overcoming what he saw as Chernyshevsky's limitations, however, Plekhanov did not abandon his anthropological approach. Convinced that the 'bio-physiological' concept of man could and had to go along with Marxist historical materialism, Plekhanov always maintained that man was first of all a biological organism and had to be studied as such. He was convinced that for Marx himself man was a biological being, deeply enmeshed in his natural environment, before he was a historical subject. But Marx grasped the dialectical process of history, as well as Darwin grasped the evolution of nature, while Chernyshevsky could not wholly understand dialectics. It is true, Plekhanov thought Chernyshevsky was basically right in considering dialectics as the best method for the analysis of concrete objects, since it provides us with the chance of analyzing them in all their qualities and relations. Plekhanov wholly shared Chernyshevsky's ideas:

> The essence [of the dialectics] consists in the fact that the thinker must not rest content with any positive conclusion, but must always search and inquire whether there are not forces and qualities in the subject which he is contemplating that are *opposed and contrary* to what this subject suggests at first glance. In this way, the thinker was obliged to look at the subject from all sides and the truth appeared to be nothing else than the results of the struggle of every possible contradictory opinion.[89]

A little naively, Plekhanov thought that Chernyshevsky provided a good example of dialectics [1938d, p.81] in his *Essays on the Gogol Period in Russian Literature*, writing:

> "Is rain good or evil?". This is an abstract question, it is impossible to solve definitively: sometimes rain is useful; sometimes, though more rarely, it is harmful. One must therefore ask himself: "When

> they have finished sowing wheat, if it pours for five hours uninterruptedly, is it useful to the wheat?". Only in this case the answer is clear and meaningful: "This rain is very useful".[90]

Plekhanov, however, pointed out that Chernyshevsky did not understand that the dialectic was also the only 'scientific' method for any understanding of the reality as constituted of processes and changes.

Yet, Plekhanov's dialectics never went so far as to doubt that the subject of knowledge was 'natural man', whose knowledge was conditioned by his physiological organization. It is however interesting to note that such conditioning was much stronger according to Plekhanov, than to Chernyshevsky. The latter opposed those physiologists and naturalists who drew proofs of the relativity of our knowledge from their research, accusing them of reiterating "Kant's metaphysical theory".[91] Plekhanov, by contrast, often seemed to share the contemporary physiologists' 'relativism'.

It will be the aim of the third chapter to show how Plekhanov's attitude toward physiology was influenced by the conditions of Russian scientific thought. Here we shall merely say that Plekhanov did not consciously refer to Western 'physiological' relativism, which actually led back to Kant, but rather to its Russian 'materialist' interpretation.[92] Plekhanov thereby persuaded himself that the physiological conditioning of our knowledge corresponded to the basic principles of materialism, and that it represented the latter's necessary corollary, as a coherent 'scientific' version of that psycho-physical parallelism that Chernyshevsky and all of the materialists before him had drawn from their monism.

CHAPTER THREE

The Scientific Referents of Plekhanov's Theory of Knowledge

I. PHYSIOLOGY IN RUSSIAN CULTURE AT THE END OF THE NINETEENTH CENTURY

Western and Soviet commentators have often maintained that Plekhanov did not pay enough attention to the transformation contemporary natural sciences were undergoing. Nevertheless, by analysing his writings and reading it appears that he was actually deeply concerned with the sciences. Plekhanov had been interested in scientific studies since he attended the Mining Institute in Saint Petersburg as a young man. When Pavel Aksel'rod met him at the beginning of the 1870's, Plekhanov "dreamed of finishing the Mining Institute and going abroad to improve himself in chemistry."[1] Some fellow-students later told Rosalija Markovna Plekhanova that, when her husband left the Institute in order to devote himself wholly to revolutionary activity, a professor of chemistry declared: "What a pity! He would have become a great scholar!". [*LNP*, I, p.201]

All through his life Plekhanov showed a keen interest in various scientific disciplines, an interest evident not only in his extensive reading, but also in the lectures and lessons he attended at the university whenever he could, especially during the first years abroad. Between May and July 1886, for instance, he attended Karl Vogt's lessons on zoology and comparative anatomy in Geneva. In the *Dom Plekhanova* Archives we find one of Plekhanov's notebooks, packed with notes from Vogt's lectures.[2] As regards the genesis and development of Plekhanov's theory of knowledge, it is particularly compelling to examine his interests in two fields of contemporary natural sciences: physiology and the biological theory of evolution.

Undoubtedly, anyone who looked for a 'scientific' foundation for materialistic psychology had to refer to physiology, which provided the chance of explaining in physical and chemical terms all those phenomena, such as perception, sensation, etc., that idealistic psychologists had always explained through 'introspection' and 'dualism'. The special interest physiology generated in nineteenth-century Russia has been widely recognized in both Western and Soviet literature.[3] As was happening in many other European

countries, mid-century Russian idealism was loosing most of its authority, while materialism, which seemed soundly founded on natural sciences, was gaining more and more prestige. As Plekhanov himself wrote a few years later: at the end of the 1850's "Karl Vogt, Büchner and Moleschott acquired ... very honourable reputations, while German idealistic philosophers became synonyms for all kinds of reaction." [1894a, p.68] Among the 'oddities' Dostoevsky ascribed in his *Demons* to a young second lieutenant, who was accused of insubordination and probably linked to the revolutionary movement, he wrote: "in his room he had arranged on three supports, like lecterns, Vogt's, Moleschott's and Büchner's works and in front of each lectern he lit church-candles."[4]

Very few, certainly, went so far as Dostoevsky's character did, but much of the Russian intelligentsia found in Vogt's, Büchner's and Moleschott's works "the ideas necessary to challenge official ideology, orthodox religious thought, and idealistic metaphysics".[5] In 1860, for instance, a revolutionary students' circle in Moscow took the initiative of publishing illegally a second issue of Büchner's *Stoff und Kraft*, which had come out legally a few years before and had very quickly sold out thanks to its great success mainly among revolutionary youth.[6] Those years also saw the translation and publication of Liebig's *Letters on Chemistry*, Wundt's *Letters on Animals' and Men's Soul*, Lewes' *Physiology of Common Life* and many other scientific works, many of which generated animated discussions among students. Even journals of different political trends, which usually did not devote much space to scientific questions, got involved in lively debates on problems of natural science. In 1860-61 the conservative *Russkij Vestnik* published a series of articles which aimed to show the incompatibility of experimental physiology with the moral principles of Christian faith. In the progressive *Sovremennik* M.A. Antonovic stood in defence of the Russian translation of Lewes' work, writing a very favourable review. During the same period Darwinism was spreading in Russia. A few months after *On the Origin of the Species* appeared, the students at the University of Saint Petersburg could listen to a simple but exhaustive report by the paleontologist Kutorga, although he did not share Darwin's point of view.[7] The first edition of Darwin's work in Russian translation was sold out in less than one year:

> in Western Europe Darwin's theory encountered firmly established religious traditions among many of the educated elite, but in Russia its appearance coincided with the rise of a secular intelligentsia that venerated the natural sciences. ... Biology had been the last refuge in the natural sciences of teleological and religious interpretations,

> and the young radicals saw in Drawin's theory a splendid materialistic interpretation which explained the evolution of all organic life.[8]

Although not all of the eminent progressive thinkers were so enthusiastical about evolutionism, in Russia Darwin's theory met with such a great success that later S.S. Glagol'ev, who had been professor at the Moscow Spiritual Academy and who had led the orthodox Church's polemics against Darwinism, stated about the 1860's: "there was a time when no one in Russia was permitted to open his mouth to object to the 'eternal truths' enunciated by Darwin".[9]

Slowly but surely modern scientific trends penetrated the academic world, in spite of the Government's own hostility. According to Alexander Vucinich:

> when Hermann von Helmholtz, Karl Ludwig, Emil du Bois-Reymond, and Ernst von Brucke produced theories that reduced physiology to applied physics and chemistry - a direct attack on vitalism - the Ministry of National Education became eager to entrust the teaching of physiology to men who fully endorsed the doctrine of a completely separate "matter" and "spirit", and who opposed all efforts to tie psychology and physiology. Philosophical dualism became the cornerstone of the official ideology.[10]

From about 1850 to 1860, the chairs of empirical psychology at the Universities were filled only by theologians.[11]

Official efforts, however, could hardly keep scholars and students from being attracted by modern experimental science, and sometimes the students themselves 'imposed' the new experimental method. This was the case, for instance, at Kazan' University in 1858 when Vasilij (Wilhelm) Bervy, a professor of English origins who taught physiology and pathology there, spoke out against naturalistic physiology. Soon Dobroljubov's harsh critique appeared in *Sovremennik*, supporting a letter signed by seventy-seven Kazan' students who categorically refused to listen to their professor's lessons any more, and who forcefully recommended that he leave the chair of physiology, which was indeed given to another professor.[12]

Recent scholarship has often emphasized the enthusiasm that science was exciting among wider social strata as well. Between 1859 and 1862, first in St.Petersburg, then in many other cities, public conferences were convening on scientific subjects. Professors such as the zoologist Nikolaj A. Severcov and the physiologist Evgenij V. Pelikan gave lectures at the *Passage* in Petersburg, and these achieved

widespread renown, as the main journals and newspapers of the town published enthusiastic reviews of them.[13]

This was a time when in Western Europe, particularly in Germany, a whole generation of scholars and researchers abandoned the metaphysical speculations of *Naturphilosophie* and turned physiology into a real experimental science. Russian revolutionary-democrats and nihilists found therein solid ground for their own theories: "they were convinced, - Vucinich wrote - that scientific insights into the working of the human organism would lead to a better understanding of human society".[14] Although Chernyshevsky was very far from being an enthusiastic supporter of scientism, among the books he took with him when incarcerated in Peter-Paul's Fortress were works by Darwin, Lyell, Huxley as well as Vogt's *Physiological Letters*.[15] Pisarev, probably the most passionate propagator of scientific thought in Russia, devoted a few articles in 1861 to Vogt's above mentioned work and Moleschott's *Physiological Sketches*.[16]

In the 1860's-70's Moleschott's and Vogt's physiology, along with Claude Bernard's, became an important element of Russian progressive intellectuals' materialist 'faith'. Both Kirsanov and Lapukhov, the "new men" of Chernyshevsky's *What is to Be Done?* were physicians and physiologists, particularly interested in the nervous system; in *Fathers and Sons* the nihilist Bazarov was a physician too, a convinced supporter of natural sciences and sensualism.

It is clear that conservatives feared the consequences of the spreading interest in experimental physiology and philosophical materialism. The conversation between Alëša and Mitja Karamazov in Dostoevsky's novel is somehow emblematical. Reporting the ideas he had talked over with the nihilist Rakitin, Mitja worried about the ethical results one might drive from modern physiology:

> Imagine: there, in the nerves, in the head, i.e. there, in the brain, those nerves (the hell with them!) ... there are a sort of small tails, within those nerves, well ... and that is why I perceive, and then think ... because of those small tails, and not because there is a soul within me, or because I am someone's image and likeness, those are all nonsense... . This science is magnificent, Alëša! A new man is coming: this I understand. But nevertheless I feel a sort of regret for God!

From the explanation of perceptival phenomena in physical and chemical terms, implying the elimination of any idea of the human soul and God's creation of man in his own image, would have derived the end of religion. "There is nothing to do, Your Reverence, draw back a little,

the chemistry is coming!"[17] Without believing in God and in future life, the "new men", as absolute masters of their own fate, would have all become rogues, knaves, "Bernards", as Mitja said, making the well-known French physiologist a symbol of a whole tribe of men devoid of any moral scruple.

On such a complex historical landscape, where physiology had already acquired a special 'progressive' meaning, worked Ivan Mikhajlovic Sečenov. Both as a physiologist and as a democrat, he was at once son and interpreter of his own time.

II. IVAN M. SEČENOV

A. Sečenov and Nikolaj Chernyshevsky

Ivan Mikhajlovic Sečenov (1829 - 1905) holds a special interest to this study because Plekhanov referred frequently to Sečenov's opinions while expounding his own theory of knowledge, and, more generally, because Sečenov contributed greatly both as a scientist and as a writer to disseminating 'physiological psychology' in Russian progressive thought.

During his studies at Moscow University he became acquainted with Flourens' and Magendie's works through the lectures of one of his professors, I.T. Glebov. Sečenov then went abroad to do specialized studies, and he came in contact with the most famous scholars of the rising field of experimentalism, working in the most important laboratories. He went to Berlin in order to attend Johannes Müller's lectures and to follow Emile Du Bois-Reymond's activity; he travelled to Leipzig and to Vienna where he attended Karl Ludwig's laboratory, and to Heidelberg where he attended Helmholtz's.[18] In 1860 Du Bois-Reymond said Sečenov had already gone wherever "one had to have been".[19]

At that time, influenced by the success of the neuro-physiologists, Sečenov developed the crede which was to guide all his later research. Recently an authoritative scholar of Sečenov's work epitomized it as follows: "to strictly apply the experimentally verifiable causal category of reflex in order to explain the complex, intricate picture of mental activity".[20] Though he shared the Germans' determinism, he very soon broke away from their anti-vitalistic 'mechanicism' and went over to a biological approach, just as the French physiologists were devoting

more and more attention to the self-regulation of the organism with respect to its milieu. As a convinced supporter of evolutionism, Sečenov went so far as to conceive of the reflex as an important factor in the fulfillment of the living organism's need to adapt. To join 'mechanicist' and 'biological-evolutionistic' paradigms was the task Sečenov consciously took upon himself as of 1878.[21]

In this manner Sečenov went beyond vulgar materialism to share Chernyshevsky's anthropological outlook. Some commentators have even maintained that Sečenov had identified a "physiological substratum" in Chernyshevsky's 'anthropological materialism'.[22] Certainly Sečenov and Chernyshevsky were closely connected to each other, by personal links, too. The *trait d'union* between them was Peter I. Bokov, Chernyshevsky's family doctor and friend, who was close to Sečenov as well. Bokov had arranged a fictitious marriage to Marija A. Obručeva, sister of one of Chernyshevsky's collaborators, in order to withdraw her from her father's tutelage and to provide her with the chance of studying at the University. For a while she studied at the Medical-Surgical Academy in St.Petersburg, attended Sečenov's lessons, and worked in a laboratory under the latter's guidance. At that time Sečenov was actively supporting women's right to higher education, thereby getting closer to the democratic circles. Through Peter and Marija Bokovy, Sečenov met with Chernyshevsky. An invitation, written on a card of Bokov's, probably in 1861-1862, reads: "P.I. Bokov and I.M. Sečenov invite Chernyshevsky and Aleksandr Nikolaevič [Pypin, - Chenyshevsky's cousin and friend] on the occasion of Marija Aleksandrovna's final exams".[23] Meeting the Bokovy meant a great deal to Sečenov: in Peter Ivanovič he found a good friend, and in Marija Aleksandrova he met the partner who was to be with him all through his life.[24] It is not surprising that many contemporaries thought that Sečenov and Bokov had inspired Chernyshevsky for the characters of Kirsanov and Lapukhov in his *What is to Be Done?*.[25]

Invited by Nekrasov, if not by Chernyshevsky himself before his arrest, to contribute to their journal, Sečenov sent to *Sovremennik* his first not strictly specialized work, an article about the physiological basis of psychological processes. Tsarist censors, however, first obliged him to change its title, which sounded too openly materialist, then set themselves against its publication in such a widely-read journal. Thus, although he was not a revolutionary, Sečenov became a 'suspect' in the eyes of the tsarist police, because of his open support the cause of women's higher education, his close personal contacts with well-known democrats, and, later, his brief participation in 1903-1904, in popular lessons for workers.[26]

The work that Sečenov had written for *Sovremennik* finally came out in a specialized journal, *Medicinskij Vestnik*, under the much more obscure title: 'The Reflexes of the Brain'. Its success, however, was extraordinary. As a contemporary later said:

> Not only did the youth read the 'Reflexes' with most serious attention, but more mature generations did so as well; this particular issue of *Medicinskij Vestnik* passed from hand to hand; it was eagerly sought and cost a lot. The name of I.M. Sečenov, which up to then was known just to an intimate circle of scholars, spread throughout Russia. When, three years later, I found myself in Siberia ..., I happened to meet even there people who not only had read 'Reflexes' with great attention, but had adopted the ideas that came logically out of the work as well.[27]

With this work Sečenov broke into an already lively polemic which had arisen as a consequence of the publication of Chernyshevsky's *Anthropological Principle*. Touching on the question of 'spirit' and its 'dependence on body', Sečenov resolutely sided with anthropological materialism.[28] A few years later he wrote on this subject:

> Man is a particular unit in the series of phenomena which constitute our planet, and even his spiritual life, although it might be the subject of scientific research, is a terrestrial phenomenon.[29]

By rejecting any idealistic or introspective psychology, he promoted a physiological analysis of mental phenomena,[30] aimed particularly at clearing up the process of sensation, since it was considered to be the nucleus and foundation of the whole development of the human mind. Sečenov devoted a few articles in the 1890's specifically to discussing epistemological problems necessarily connected with such a theory, siding once more with Chernyshevsky in the latter's polemic against agnosticism and "illusionism".

B. Sečenov and Hermann von Helmholtz

These articles are of particular interest to us because Plekhanov paid a great deal of attention to them, and because commentators referred to them to 'prove' alternatively that Sečenov was Helmholtz's 'follower'

or his 'critic'. This problem is all the more important if we recall that Soviet scholars considered Sečenov to be a forerunner of the Leninist theory of reflection, and they usually preferred to ascribe Plekhanov's epistemological 'errors' directly to Helmholtz, as Lenin himself did, without considering the actual attitude that either Sečenov or Plekhanov had towards the German physiologist.[31] Sečenov's opinion of Helmholtz's thought is therefore most important if we are to clarify Plekhanov's views, avoid traditional interpretations, and base our ideas rather on the historical interlacing of events and ideas.

Sečenov met Helmholtz personally in 1859, while he was working in the latter's laboratory in Heidelberg. "The great Helmholtz", as Sečenov more than once called him, exerted an extraordinary influence over the young Russian scholar. A Russian friend of Sečenov's who was in Heidelberg at that time remembered that "Sečenov was completely in love with Helmholtz".[32] Several years later, Sečenov even compared his feelings when he met Helmholtz with the emotion he felt when seeing a work of art for the first time.[33] Embarrassed and confused before such a master, Sečenov, as a student, did not dare to approach him more than he had to. He wrote:

> We usually caught no more than a glimpse of Helmholtz. Every day he came once to our laboratory, went to everyone who was working there, asked everybody if everything was all right, and gave explanations if anybody needed them.[34]

Helmholtz, however, noticed and appreciated Sečenov's talent. To the latter's former professor Karl Ludwig, Helmholtz wrote that he liked their common student very much.[35]

Helmholtz was undoubtedly Sečenov's real 'master', directly in physiology, indirectly in psychology. As a convinced exponent of the 'physical' unity of nature and, consequently, of the *reductio ad physicam* of all the natural sciences,[36] Helmholtz was at that time pursuing epistemological reflections which would lead him to give a 'physiological' meaning to Kant's transcendental. Kant's subject, indeed, ceased to be a logical function, while identifying itself with all psycho-physiological functions of the living organism.

Johannes Müller's law of the specific energy of nerves, in Helmholtz's opinion, was both the scientific foundation and the empirical confirmation of Kant's ideas:

> According to this law, each sensorial nerve has its own way of feeling; each may be activated by a series of stimulations, but mostly the same stimulation can affect different sense organs, and if this

> happens ... in every single sensitive nerve there is always a sensation corresponding to its own specific energy. The most profound differences among the qualities of sensations ... do not depend at all on the nature of the external stimuli, but on the nature of the nervous apparatus involved.[37]

The physiology of sense organs therefore set itself on the same plane as the ideas that Kant and, before him, Locke had maintained: it aimed at identifying the role our constitution plays in the way things appear to us:

> Kant had formulated the theory of the forms of intuiting and thinking, given prior to every experience ..., into which forms any content we may represent must necessarily be received, in order to become a representation.[38]

According to Helmholtz, contemporary scientific researches had put Kant's *a priori* in a concrete form - the physiological specificity of the organs of perception. But if "kind and manner of sense perception depend less on the peculiarities of the perceived object than on those of the sense organ through which we got the information",[39] our sensations turn out to be just 'signs', not 'images' of the objects that excite them. Helmholtz therefore concluded:

> sense perceptions are to us just the symbols of external objects, and correspond to the latter approximately like writing and verbal breath correspond to the things they designate.[40]

However,

> [though] our sensations are ... only *signs*, whose particular character depend entirely on our structure, they are not to be rejected as a mere semblance: sensations are actually signs of *something*, that exists or happens, and - what is most important they can picture to us the *law* of that happening.[41]

To this end it is enough for such a correspondence to exist between sign and thing

> [that] like objects, exerting their influence in like circumstances, [evoke] like signs and that unlike signs always [correspond] ... to unlike influences. ... Any natural law states that consequences which are like under certain respects always follow circumstances which are like under certain respects. Since the same sign in the sphere of our senses always means the same thing, the same effects following the

same physical causes correspond to sensations which wholly regularly follow each other.[42]

It is clear that such a theory is very close to the views that Sečenov held in his articles. Asking himself if we can "consider our consciousness as a sort of mirror, and within what precise limits", Sečenov singled out a general correspondence between 'sensible signs', i.e. our perceptions, and reality. For the development of science itself to be possible, "*to any identity of signs from external objects must correspond identity of realities; to any likeness of signs must correspond likeness of realities* and, finally, *to any difference of signs must correspond difference in actuality*.[43]

That our visual perceptions of form and movement resemble the real forms and movements, which many experiments prove, is just a particular case of a more general 'parallelism'.[44] In the most exact meaning of the word, indeed, parallelism is valid "*as far as the distinction of signs regards analysis of objects and phenomena within space and time*".[45] Beyond these limits parallelism becomes conventional: it depends on the subject that a certain object appear to him with a certain color or tastes with a certain flavor. When we perceive difference or likeness between two things, however, we are sure that there really exists a difference or likeness within the real state of the thing. But in this case the correspondence of sensation to the property of the object is as conventional as the relation of the thing to its name.[46] It is therefore undeniable that Sečenov acknowledged a relation of sense-meaning, not of image-reflex, to exist between perception and perceived object. As a consequence, we cannot reduce Sečenov's use of the word 'sign' to the level of a terminological inaccuracy, which Soviet scholars have very often maintained.[47]

It would nevertheless be equally over-simplified to consider Sečenov's theory as just a Russian version of Helmholtz's 'physiological Kantianism'. Although Sečenov appreciated Helmholtz's 'materialistic' interpretation of Kant's philosophy,[48] he relied much more on its physiological than on its Kantian philosophical implications. However, Sečenov's apparent unconcern for Helmholtz's philosophy is not enough to obscure his siding with materialism. Sečenov, indeed, openly stood against a very wide-spread 'idealistic' interpretation of contemporary physiology of sense organs, which Russian idealists and neo-Kantians had actively supported.

Helmholtz had been very well-known in Russia since the 1870's. While introducing his class on 'Physiology of the Organ of Sight' at Saint Petersburg Medical-Surgical Academy in 1873, for instance, Dobrovol'skij followed Helmholtz in deeming "Müller's law" to be "an

empirical confirmation of Kant's theoretical views on the nature of human knowledge". He therefore concluded:

> Our visual representations are *actions*, that the objects we see act on our nervous system, on our consciousness. But any action depends as much on the nature of the acting object, as on the nature of the object on which the action is performed.[49]

Dobrovol'skij's had not been a mere 'academic' speech: Mikhajlovskij re-echoed it, while founding his phenomenism precisely on the results of contemporary physiology of sense organs.[50]

Later, during the 1890's, a lively discussion broke out among university psychologists about Helmholtz's theory of 'signs'. Many idealists understood it as a confirmation of their own opinions: Nikolaj Grot, chief editor of the important journal of the Moscow Psychological Society, for example, availed himself of the results of physiology in order to maintain that "between the physical movement and the mental act of sensation there is an impassable abyss".[51] He thereby rejected any attempt to identify the psychology and the physiology of brain and sense organs. In 1891 Čelpanov, in an article devoted to Helmholtz, expressed appreciation of the latter's activity "as a philosopher and psychologist", considering it as a prosecution of Kant's own reflections.[52] The speech that Sečenov delivered in November 1894 to a meeting of the "Imperial Society of Amateurs of Natural Science, Anthropology and Ethnography", entitled: 'Hermann von Helmholtz as a Physiologist' was thus highly controversial. By insisting on Helmholtz's merits within the sphere of the physiology of sight, Sečenov went through the 'materialistic' elements of Helmholtz's thought. He particularly emphasized the problem of the experiential genesis of spatial sight, a subject on which Helmholtz had encountered opposition from innatists and 'orthodox' Kantians.

According to Sečenov, Helmholtz had actually thought the 'spatial' character of sensations that came from external objects, depended on how the human eye and particularly the retina worked. The movements that a man's eye was forced to make in order to see something, were perceived by a sort of "muscular sense" within him, which could thereby 'measure' spatial relations. In Sečenov's opinion, this faculty had its origins in experience. Renewing the eighteenth-century Molyneux' problem, Sečenov concluded that if the faculty of spatial vision were inborn, the person born blind who got back his sight as an adult would have showed signs of it as soon as he saw the external

world. But this did not happen.[53]

It is interesting to note that this conception of spatial vision could easily be considered as an aspect of Helmholtz's 'physiological' understanding of Kant's transcendental. In this regard Sečenov wrote:

> Since Kant it is widely believed that in order to perceive spatial and succeeding relations, man owns a special organ, a sort of internal sight, that immediately gives to our consciousness information on relations of this or that kind. This idea proved right to a certain extent, since such an organ actually exists and should be named *muscular sense*.[54]

Sečenov's insisting on this point might be explained by the fact that the problem of space was then object of a lively debate among university psychologists.[55] But his interest in the question of the *a priori* had much deeper roots in his own reflection. The interaction between experience and inborn elements, between *a priori* and *a posteriori*, was in fact the most original nucleus of Sečenov's epistemology, which developed through the interlacing influence of both Helmholtz and Spencer. Far from sharing Helmholtz's ideas *tout court*, Sečenov molded his issues into an original scheme, which is worth further examination, since it shows intriguing analogies with Plekhanov's own views on the same problem.

C. Sečenov and Herbert Spencer

Helmholtz's physiology could not wholly satisfy Sečenov. Having attended Claude Bernard's school as a young man,[56] he asked science to answer questions that Helmholtz had never tackled. Sečenov's interest in evolutionism raised 'biological' problems that Helmholtz's physical approach could not deal with. Helmholtz could at best explain the interaction between organism and its environment 'mechanically'. Though he acknowledged the specificity of biological teleology, he wrote, for instance: "The animal organism is no different ... from a steam-engine, as regards the way it acquires heat and force".[57] Darwin's idea that the organism adapts itself to the environment to which it relates, within a complex, articulate 'biological' interaction, went beyond such a mechanical conception.

As a firm supporter of the theory of evolution, Sečenov helped to disseminate it in Russia. In 1868 he edited the first Russian translation

of *The Origin of the Species*; three years later his wife translated *The Origin of Man*. But on psychological issues he preferred Spencer to Darwin. It is likely that Sečenov had been acquainted with Spencer's ideas since 1867, at the time when he was starting his project of an objective, experimental, 'medical psychology'. When, in 1870, the second edition of Spencer's *Principles of Psychology* was published, Sečenov's wife wrote to a Russian friend living abroad and asked him to send them the book as soon as possible.[58] Although Sečenov's article 'Who Should Develop Psychology and How?', published in 1873, did not refer to Spencer's work, a few years later he had already adopted the general program of Spencer's psychology.[59]

According to Sečenov, it was Spencer's great achievement to have gone beyond the traditional opposition of sensualism and innatism or, in other words, of vulgar materialism and idealism. He wrote:

> In the sensualists' opinion, the main determinant of mental life is the external world with all the variety of its relations and dependences, while in the idealists' opinion it is the spiritual organization inborn within man.[60]

But, if the sensualists had never been able to precisely define "the properties and limits of sensitive organization", idealists ended up in failure as well:

> in defiance of all evidence, they have tried to derive the whole of man's mental life from only one factor: his spiritual organization, leaving the other, i.e. the actions from without, absolutely to one side because it is impossible to know them immediately.[61]

According to Sečenov, Spencer was able to reconcile the age-old opposition between the two schools by approaching this problem from the standpoint of the most recent biological findings.

> In fact, Spencer's hypothesis is equivalent to the sensualist theory in the sense that at any stage of mental development it gives to the actions from the external world the meaning of factors that determine the mental phenomenon. But these influences, according to Spencer's theory, fall in any man not on a formless, organic basis, like extreme sensualists maintained, but on a ground that, owing to transmission in inheritance, has been tilled for ages by the increasing life experience of the race.[62]

If one were to undertake a 'biological' analysis of the human organism,

Sečenov thought one could find that "a certain organization" lay at the basis of every vital phenomenon. This had to apply to thought too, since "mental activity is one of the aspects, one of the manifestations of animal organic life, such as the structure and the physiological functions of organisms".[63] Sečenov therefore concluded that we work out in perceptions and representations the materials that the external world provides us with, through our sensitive, physiological organization.

In comparison with Helmholtz's static approach, Spencer's theory had the great advantage, in Sečenov's opinion, of being able to account for development and evolution. On the basis of Spencer's theories, Sečenov singled out a complex interaction between organism and its environment, wherein the inborn sensitive organization itself modifies in its turn the environment by which it is excited and, through various generations, transformed. He wrote:

> The higher ... sensitive organization, through the mediation of which the animal orientates himself within time and space, is, the wider is the sphere of possible vital meetings, the more various is the environment itself that acts on the organization, and the ways of possible adaptations. From this it clearly follows that in the long chain of the evolution of organisms the complication of the organization and the complication of the environment that acts on it are mutually conditioning factors.[64]

Sečenov shared Spencer's belief that the human organism is not an unchangeable, eternal datum, but that it acquires within, *a priori*, the common inheritance worked out, *a posteriori*, by the species. However, while Spencer considered the *a priori* to consist of cognitive structures, Sečenov argued that only 'anatomical-physiological' structures could be inborn.[65] The physiological data of sense organs were thereby molded into Spencer's biological scheme: on this basis it became possible to reconcile Helmholtz and Spencer, to join the latter's evolutionistic *a posteriori* with the former's physiological *a priori*.[66]

III. PLEKHANOV AND THE NATURAL SCIENCES

A. Plekhanov and Physiology

Convinced that the materialistic worldview had to be valid for the whole

of existence, Plekhanov could not but look for its confirmation within the natural sciences. Although he firmly rejected vulgar materialism, so widespread in contemporary so-called 'scientific' culture, [1897e, p.443] Plekhanov greatly appreciated that science had finally given up the philosophy of nature, going over to experimentalism and positivism. Therein he saw the triumph of materialistic monism: though unconsciously, naturalists had been forced to give up their vain metaphysical speculations by their own aiming at scientific explanations and materialistic inquiries into natural phenomena. [1895b, pp.760-761] Even in psychology, i.e. the science that specifically scrutinizes 'spiritual' phenomena, scientists had achieved important successes whenever they considered nature as "primary" and "the actions of the spirit as necessary effects of the movement of matter". [1896, p.142] To such a 'naturalistic' or 'physiological' psychology Plekhanov referred in order to find scientific foundations and empirical confirmation of his own anthropological and epistemological conceptions.

Naturalistic psychology closely related psychic and physico-chemical phenomena, thereby experimentally proving that non-identical unity of subject and object which Plekhanov, in accord with Feuerbach, upheld. [1897b, pp.557-558] What subjectively appeared to be a mental phenomenon, objectively referred to its physico-chemical correlative. Plekhanov wrote that "any given mental status is just *one* side of a process, the *other* side of which is a physiological phenomenon". [1910c, p.471 note]

Plekhanov did not mean thereby to assign to physiology tasks which were alien to it, or to over-estimate its meaning in comparison with other natural sciences. [1938b, p.14] As of 1890, for instance, he sided with Chernyshevsky in defending Rakhmetov, the revolutionary character in *What is to Be Done?*, against Pisarev's criticisms. In Plekhanov's opinion the real "new man" was not to be just a scientist, he had to be rather a revolutionary. [1890, pp.165-166] Plekhanov, however, believed that physiology was an indispensable support for any psychological theory that sought to avoid metaphysical speculation. Often he quoted with approval Huxley's words:

> Surely no one who is cognisant of the facts of the case, nowadays, doubts that the roots of psychology lie in the physiology of the nervous system. What we call the operations of the mind are functions of the brain, and the materials of consciousness are products of cerebral activity. Cabanis may have made use of crude and misleading phraseology when he said that the brain secretes thought as the liver secretes bile; but the conception which that much-abused phrase embodies is, nevertheless, far more consistent with fact than the popular notion that the mind is a metaphysical

> entity seated in the head, but as independent of the brain as a telegraph operator is of his instrument.[67]

Plekhanov's interest in physiological psychology clearly appears in his constant references to Sečenov while he expounded his own epistemology. Even when he rejected 'hieroglyphics', a more or less faithful translation of Sečenov's 'conventional signs', Plekhanov never failed to state that he fully shared the Russian physiologist's opinions. Plekhanov certainly read Sečenov's works; there are, however, only a few documentary traces left of his reading: the *Dom Plekhanova* Library contains no books or articles by Sečenov, and his name rarely appears in Plekhanov's notebooks.[68] It is therefore impossible to determine when and how precisely Plekhanov read Sečenov's works and which of them he paid attention to. Certainly he read 'Objective Thought and Reality', one of Sečenov's most compelling epistemological articles, because he kept quoting it from the time it came out in 1892. [1892, pp.480, 500-501] This circumstance suggests that Plekhanov by then had already worked out his own 'theory of hieroglyphics', independently of Sečenov's article: Plekhanov is likely rather to have used Sečenov's writing as an authoritative confirmation of his own opinions.

It is however possible that Sečenov's thought, particularly his programme to develop an objective, experimental psychology based on the physiology of the nervous system, actually did influence Plekhanov while he was developing his own epistemology. Plekhanov appreciated and admired the theoretical and revolutionary activity of Chernyshevsky's circle and he very probably knew Sečenov as well. Moreover, Plekhanov often proved he knew the polemic Sečenov had carried on against Kavelin, in favour of analytical and physiological psychology. [1895b, p.760; 1912, pp.69-70]

To Plekhanov, as well as to his contemporaries, Sečenov must have appeared as a valiant supporter of materialism against agnostics and idealists. According to Jaroševskij:

> Plekhanov saw the advantage of Sečenov's approach to the solution of the epistemological problem in the fact that: a) Sečenov acknowledged that the thing-in-itself is independent of the knowing subject; b) he deemed that sensation and thought are secondary thereto; c) he rejected the identification of matter and consciousness; d) he proved the possibility of exactly knowing objects and processes of the external world through sensible perceptions and objective thought.[69]

In Sečenov's conceptions Plekhanov was, therefore, able to find what he thought were the basic principles of any 'correct' materialistic solution of epistemological and ontological problems.

That Sečenov agreed with Helmholtz, the Kantian, on many subjects did not worry Plekhanov at all since he thought materialism had several features in common with Kantianism, and that the main difference between the two of them was that materialism could be wholly consistent, while Kantianism was forced to be contradictory. Sečenov's attitude toward Helmholtz did trouble many later Soviet commentators, however. Looking for forerunners of Leninist orthodox epistemology, they ended up by considering Sečenov to be one of them. As such, he could not have suggested to Plekhanov the 'agnostic' theory of hieroglyphics stigmatised by Lenin in *Materialism and Empirio-Criticism*. They therefore preferred to ascribe Plekhanov's epistemological 'error' to Helmholtz, as Lenin himself did. Soviet scholars very often criticized Plekhanov for being under the influence of "physical and physiological idealists of Kantian tendencies".[70] It is however impossible to find clear evidence of such an influence. If, by examining Plekhanov's library and notebooks, it is impossible exactly to establish when and how Plekhanov read Sečenov, though it is absolutely sure he did, it is even more difficult to say anything certain about Plekhanov's knowledge of Helmholtz's thought. He certainly knew the general outlines of Helmholtz's activity, which was generally well-known to contemporary educated people. Plekhanov also read several articles and books that in one way or another referred to or expounded certain aspects of Helmholtz's theories. In the second volume of his *History of Materialism*, Lange devoted a few pages to the philosophical and psychological implications of Helmholtz's physiology. Plekhanov read these pages with particular attention, as his many jottings testify.[71] He read Rau's *Empfinden und Denken* with equal interest: here, starting from Johannes Müller's and Helmholtz's theories, the author maintained that thought is a sort of higher, unified 'feeling'.[72] A few years later Plekhanov also read an article by Alois Riehl, specifically devoted to Helmholtz and his attitude to Kant, a work in which Plekhanov noted nothing relevant.[73] The title of Riehl's article is the only one, among all the titles included in the *Dom Plekhanova* Library Catalogue, where Helmholtz's name appears. If we are to judge from Plekhanov's library and notebooks, we can therefore exclude that he knew Helmholtz's thought directly. It is therefore very unlikely that the German physiologist directly influenced Plekhanov and caused his 'errors' in the theory of knowledge. It is, on the contrary, reasonable to suppose that Plekhanov attentively read second-hand outlines of Helmholtz's theories, because he felt close to Sečenov's thought.

It is therefore impossible to say that Plekhanov's hieroglyphics derived directly from Sečenov's or Helmholtz's 'conventional signs'. But it is certain that Plekhanov found confirmation for his epistemology from physiology, the developments of which he followed with particular interest throughout his life. In Plekhanov's library, as we see it today, there are a surprisingly high number of books dealing more or less directly with physiology.[74] More than once Plekhanov asked Ljubov' Aksel'rod to send to him books he wanted to read on psycho-physiology. [1900.IX-X; 1901.II.22]

If in the 1890's he found in Sečenov's articles authoritative scientific evidence of his own theory of knowledge, later it was another well-known physiologist, August Forel, who provided Plekhanov with new scientific confirmation for his conceptions on the unity of subject and object and on psycho-physical parallelism *à la* Feuerbach. A professor at the University of Zurich, Forel was very well-known among the Russian émigrée colony. Young educated revolutionaries, such as Lunacharsky, enjoyed his lectures; he personally treated Pavel Aksel'rod for his insomnia with hypnosis; and later Forel became a socialist himself.[75] A few works by Forel are kept in *Dom Plekhanova* Library, testifying through many marginalia and marks Plekhanov's attentive reading.[76]

In Forel's most important work, *Gehirn und Seele*, Plekhanov found many confirmations of what he considered La Mettrie's and Feuerbach's monism. "There is no reason, - wrote for instance Forel, - to oppose to a certain dualistic concept of soul another concept, which one might call soulless matter. Any spiritual phenomenon has its own material reverse".[77] As of 1908, Plekhanov availed himself of Forel's renown in order to provide his theories with a sounder 'scientific' ground against his antagonists' polemics: not only did not contemporary natural sciences reject materialism, but such a scientist as August Forel seemed to confirm its principles. In 1908 Plekhanov could repeat, in Forel's words, what was to be one of his most serious convictions to the end of his life: "every day brings to us convincing proofs that the psychology and the physiology of the brain are just two different ways of considering 'one and the same thing'". [1908a, p.139][78]

B. Plekhanov and the Biological Theory of Evolution

It has been already pointed out above how Sečenov had enriched

Helmholtz's physiological *a priori* by referring to Spencer's 'biological' theories. Likewise Plekhanov found in evolutionism the way to surmount the difficulties with which both eighteenth-century materialists' and Kant's theories of knowledge had struggled. Though maintaining that human faculties are changeable under the influence of social-historical conditions, Helvétius himself had actually ended up by conceiving 'human nature' as an unhistorical and basically unchangeable datum, thereby denying that any modification its environment might eventually cause in it could be bequeathed to the following generations. [1896, p.92] In his turn, Kant also could not account for development and he, too, ended up by referring consciousness to the transcendental subject's unchangeable properties. Moreover, by denying the objectivity of time, he precluded even the possibility of conceiving any process which necessarily develops within time. [1905b, pp.482-484; 1898c (added in 1906), pp.414-415][79]

According to Plekhanov, on the contrary, evolutionism agreed with dialectics in rejecting that real things are fixed and unchangeable, and in stressing process and development. Although he acknowledged that most evolutionists believed that change occured gradually and not via sharp dialectical diruptions, [1891, pp.446-447] Plekhanov pushed the convergence between evolutionism and historical materialism so far as to state that Marxism was just "Darwinism in its application to social science". [1895a, p.690 note] Indeed, the same 'spirit' underlay both theories: in striving to decipher the development of nature and surmounting any metaphysical conception of fixed species, Darwinism was essentially "a *dialectical* theory". [1896, p.131] Its field of inquiry extended to the point where the field of historical materialism started: "[Darwin] regarded the origin of man, as the origin of *a zoological species*. The supporters of the materialistic view want to explain the *historical* fate of such a species." [1899c, p.12] Not only were Marxism and Darwinism not in contrast, but they might complement each other. Darwin, for instance, had acknowledged

> that in people's moral ideas there is nothing *absolute*, that they change together with changes in the conditions in which people live. But what creates those conditions? What causes them to change? On that score Darwin says nothing, and if we say and prove they are created by the status of productive forces and change in consequence of the development of those forces, not only do we not come into conflict with Darwinism, but, on the contrary, we complete what it has stated. [*ibid.* pp.11-12]

In its turn Darwinism offered historical materialism its biological and

non-metaphysical conception of 'human nature', which was very important to Marxist anthropology, since, though considering man as a "product of history", Marxists could not leave out of consideration that he was also and basically "a product of zoological development". [1936, p.99]

On epistemological grounds, Darwin appealed less to Plekhanov than Spencer did. Notwithstanding his deep reservations over Spencer's sociology, politics, and religion - all of which he readily criticized [1894b, p.186; 1939a, p.62] Plekhanov more than once declared he agreed fully with Spencer's theory of knowledge. According to Spencer, "what we are conscious of as properties of matter, even down to its weight and resistance, are but subjective affections produced by objective agencies that are unknown and unknowable".[80] Like Plekhanov, Spencer considered there to be a strict correspondence between perceptions and reality. In order to explain his own epistemology, Plekhanov actually availed himself of the same example Spencer had used to clarify his "transformed realism":

> Let us imagine a cylinder and a cube. The cylinder is the subject, the cube is the object. The shadow which the cube casts on the cylinder is the representation. This shadow does not resemble the cube at all: the *straight* edges of the cube appear to be *bent*; its *plane* surfaces appear to be *warped*. Nevertheless, to each change in the cube will correspond a change in its shadow. [1899a, p.437-438][81]

Spencer concluded:

> we may understand very clearly how it becomes possible that a plexus of objective phenomena may be so represented by the plexus of subjective effects produced, that though the effects are totally unlike their causes, and though the relations among the effects are totally unlike the relations among their causes, and though the laws of variation in the one set of relations differ entirely from those in the other, yet the two may correspond in such way that each change in the objective reality causes in the subjective state a change exactly answering to it - thus constituting what we call a cognition of it.[82]

Spencer thus offered Plekhanov an interesting theory of correspondence between subjective 'sign' and real object. If Sečenov had found in Spencer the ideas that enabled him to reconcile Helmholtz's physiological *a priori* with the theory of biological development, from Spencer Plekhanov drew further arguments to prove that what is *a posteriori* to the species is *a priori* to the individual. Until

the beginning of the 1900's, however, Plekhanov wrote on this subject only insofar as it was connected with esthetical problems, namely the question of play. While discussing whether play is really a disinterested activity, as some thinkers considered it to be, Plekhanov acknowledged that to the single individual play really came before work, but he excluded the possibility of concluding from this that play was inborn and absolutely preceded any utilitarian activity. From the species' standpoint, indeed, work always preceded the so-called 'disinterested' activities, i.e. play or art. The latter, actually, often followed the rhythm of work and repeated its gestures. [1900b, pp.56-61] In the same manner Plekhanov understood Kant's theory of beauty as disinterested pleasure, by reconciling it with the historical-materialistic conception of art: while the former was valid as regards the single individual, as regards society as a whole art had its origin and its meaning in its social utility. [1905e, pp.99-101]

A few years later Plekhanov encountered some articles on biology by authors who, though highly esteeming Kant, had felt compelled to give up the latter's theories, so as not to have to abandon the evolutionistic standpoint. Here Plekhanov found further authoritative confirmation of his own ideas: Kantianism could not combine with evolutionism just as it could not be reconciled with historical materialism. Persuaded that Marxism on the contrary wholly agreed with the results of the natural sciences, Plekhanov aimed to confirm his belief by reconciling Marxist ideas on historical determinism with contemporary scientists' genetical explanations of the faculties of human beings. While discussing the '*a priori* properties' of the human mind, for instance, the well-known biologist Johannes Reinke wrote in an article Plekhanov highly appreciated:

> Right from birth and therefore before any experience, man is forced by the character of his own intellect to think and to represent according to the categories of time, space, causality. But in the same manner he is forced *a priori* to breathe, to move, to take food, and to think and to represent *as well.* Since man is a part of nature, he is subject to the great, fundamental law, which rules all the living beings, the law of *adaptation* to the conditions of one's existence ... . All the forms of adaptation of the body - lungs, gills, organs of reproduction - are given *a priori* to the organism as well as the forms of thinking, the categories. Each generation bequeaths both these groups of properties to the following one; those properties develop together starting from a simple cell, wherein they are imperceptible and undistinguished. If one wants to consider this inheritance throughout the history of the Earth, the theory of evolution provides him with a suitable ground for such speculations.

> But if we take a single individual, ... then all his properties - might they be corporeal or psychical adaptations - are already in him *a priori*.[83]

In such a passage Plekhanov was clearly able to find confirmation of several of his ideas: the universal animation of matter as well as the organism's possessing *a priori* 'natural' faculties, which are a sort of latent potential activated by the stimuli of and under the conditions of the outside environment. But what is most compelling to us is the idea that the *a priori* might be understood as a form of working of the physiological apparatus, which is able to adapt to its environment and to transmit its traits by inheritance to the following generations. Such a conception was certain to appear correct according to Sečenov's theory, and surely Plekhanov had just such an understanding in mind while carrying on his epistemology. In one of his notebooks, which dates back to the period up to 1894, while commenting upon a clearly Spencerian passage by Alfred Fouillée, Plekhanov noted: "the *a priori* elements in consciousness are just those hereditary habits".[84] Likewise Plekhanov criticized a passage from Dietzgen's *Letters on Logic*, in which the latter stated: "it is necessary to consider that in any acquired knowledge there is something inborn concealed as well as in any inborn knowledge there is something acquired". Plekhanov jotted down: "It would be clear if that were explained on the standpoint of evolution".[85] In 1905, while aiming to account for self-sacrifice from a materialistic, 'utilitarian', and 'egoistic' standpoint, Plekhanov carried on similar reflections:

> A particular individual is born with an *a priori* "aptitude for self-sacrifice", just as it is born - according to ... Reinke - with an "*a priori*" faculty to breathe and digest; but there is nothing mysterious in this "*a prioriness*": it was formed gradually in the long, long process of development. [1905b, p.494]

Did Plekhanov thereby maintain the hereditary character of the acquired traits? It is hard to be certain. Plekhanov read Darwin's *Origin of Species* and he more than once remarked on the complexity of natural selection according to Darwin. On his copy of that work, Plekhanov particularly jotted down the following passage:

> The theory of natural selection is grounded on the belief that each new variety, and ultimately each new species, is produced and maintained by having some advantages over those with which it

> comes into competition; and the consequent extinction of the less-favored forms almost inevitably follows.[86]

In this manner one may maintain that man develops his knowing faculties under the stimulus of his external environment, by reacting to it in a complex process of gradual adaptation. The acquisition of new ways of knowledge by an individual would be an important condition for success in the struggle for life. He would therefore be able to survive, reproduce and trasmit those useful traits to the following generations.

Thus, Plekhanov can be said to have wedded his newly-acquired evolutionistic scheme to his physiological conception of *a priori* worked out on the basis of the results of natural sciences. Besides the considerations we have put forward so far, the maturity of Plekhanov's scientific interest proves on its own that he was not just paying a sort of dutiful tribute to positivistic 'scientism'. Although mostly disregarded in both Western and Soviet literature, Plekhanov's readings and reflections on contemporary natural sciences therefore turn out to be most important in this attempt to reconstruct the complex background to his theory of knowledge.

CONCLUSION

After having reconstructed the main features of Plekhanov's philosophical and scientific readings, it is worth reflecting on his dialectics. Plekhanov dealt with dialectics more seriously than most of his contemporary Marxists since he considered 'dialectics' to be so important within Marxist thought as to choose it as Marxism's most characteristic feature. After 1891, Plekhanov wrote about Marxism as both 'historical' and 'dialectical' materialism. As his writing for the 60th anniversary of Hegel's death, [1891] his harsh polemic against Bernstein's declared contempt for dialectics and, more generally, his whole theoretical work clearly shows, Plekhanov thought that Hegel's dialectic was the greatest contribution that non-materialist philosophy had ever made to the development of materialistic conceptions. From this standpoint, Marx' dialectics was literally nothing more than the 'reversed' version of Hegel's idealistic dialectic. Plekhanov wrote:

> Dialectics was also known before Hegel. But Hegel handled it much more effectively than his predecessors did. In the hands of that idealist of genius it becomes a powerful tool for knowledge of the whole existent. [1891, p.443]

Marx developed the materialistic meaning of dialectics Hegel had, though unwillingly, maintained. According to Plekhanov, dialectics was inherently materialistic, being at the same time the objective law of development of reality and, as a consequence, the only comprehensive method of knowledge. Chernyshevskij had considered attention to all aspects and relations of any phenomenon to be the most characteristic feature of 'the dialectical method of thinking'. Although he basically agreed with this definition, Plekhanov completed it with the following consideration:

> An attentive attitude towards reality is, of course, a necessary condition of correct thinking. But dialectical method is first of all and mainly characterized by the fact that it seeks out the forces which condition the development of a certain phenomenon within the phenomenon itself, and not in these or those sympathies or antipathies of the seeker. [1909e, p.269]

In Plekhanov's view this meant that the essence of dialectical method was identical with the basic principle of historical materialism, since:

> its force lies in its awareness that the course of ideas is determined by the course of things and that therefore the subjective logic of the thinker must follow the objective logic of the phenomenon studied. [*loc.cit.*]

Nor should one forget that "the objective logic" of any phenomenon, in Plekhanov's opinion, was dialectical itself. For Plekhanov, as for Hegel, dialectics was at the same time method of knowledge and objective law of the development of reality.[1] But, while for Hegel both those aspects had their foundation in the development of the Idea,[2] for Plekhanov, it was the latter aspect that somehow supported and grounded itself and the former. It was, indeed, the dialectic as the objective law of reality that Plekhanov insisted on: according to him, dialectics was the best method in any natural or historical science, precisely because it could grasp reality as it is, as a totality of processes, while the 'metaphysical' methods did not wholly 'correspond' to reality, since they singled out just particular moments and aspects of its. [1938e, pp.126-128] For Plekhanov, knowledge, both as 'professional' science (*nauka*) and as the organized result of the activity of knowing (*znanie* as result of *poznanie*), was the isomorphic description of the processes and developments which constituted reality. Only dialectics, therefore, could be chosen as its method. Unlike 'metaphysical' intellectualism, dialectics could successfully lead through the contradictions and 'leaps' of reality, accounting for them faithfully.

In this respect dialectics differed markedly from evolutionism, though Plekhanov often seemed to confuse the two. Unlike the unilateral and rather conservative evolutionists, dialectical thinkers could account for both the gradual, continuous process and the necessary, qualitative leaps that quantitative changes led to. Plekhanov wrote:

> Sometimes it is said that the standpoint of dialectics is identical with the standpoint of evolution. And there is no doubt that these two methods have points of reciprocal contact. Nevertheless between them there is a very deep and significant difference, which, as we must acknowledge, is far from being in favour of the theory of evolution. Contemporary evolutionists endow their theory with a considerable touch of conservatism. They want to prove that in both nature and history there is no leap. In its turn dialectics knows very well that in nature as well as in human thought and history leaps are unavoidable. But it does not fail to take another unquestionable fact into consideration as well: that in all moments of change there acts the same and one uninterrupted process. It only tries to clear up this series of conditions, on which gradual change must necessarily lead

to a leap. [1891, p.446; see also 1889, p.386 note]

Plekhanov firmly believed that the dialectical method had already asserted its authority in both natural and social sciences, and the fact that he thought it was Marx who finally made this assertion in social sciences is not at all surprising. After Plekhanov's criticism of the evolutionists' disposition to gradualism, it is rather stranger to find that he maintained that Darwin had applied dialectics to natural sciences. Echoing Engels' own appreciation of the English naturalist's ideas,[3] Plekhanov applauded Darwin's explication of how gradual changes within certain animals or vegetables lead at one point to the creation of new species. [1905b, p.85] Since dialectics was, for Plekhanov, the objective law of the development of reality to which all existence was subject, Darwin's theory was to provide him with both a good example and a 'scientific' confirmation of his ideas. Although he never thought that historical materialism might be reduced to evolutionism, or economics to biology,[4] Plekhanov went so far as to state that the Marxist dialectics had its foundation and justification precisely in its successful application within natural sciences. Once he polemically jotted down: "What is the unique 'philosophical presupposition' of our dialectics? Contemporary natural science." [1974d, p.95]

To put it schematically, according to Plekhanov, there was a sort of division within reality and, as a consequence, within human knowledge and science - a split between two different, but wholly correspondent aspects: on the one hand nature and biological evolutionism, on the other society and Marxism, as dialectical sociology. Although some commentators maintain that Plekhanov did grasp, though a little superficially, the dialectical 'leap' between nature and history,[5] I rather think that for Plekhanov, as for many of his contemporaries, nature was mainly viewed as a mere external 'presupposition' of society.[6]

Plekhanov did actually single out what he considered to be the basic principle of dialectics within Marx' thought: "In his *Capital* Marx writes that man, while acting on the external world and changing it, thereby changes his own nature too. This is the dialectical standpoint, which sheds wholly new light on the problems of social life." [1905b, p.86] But, at the same time, Plekhanov seemed to limit the validity of this standpoint to the social sciences, while as regards natural sciences, the laws of development and evolution would already provide us with a 'dialectical' understanding of nature.

Why did Plekhanov 'confuse' evolution and dialectics in natural sciences? An answer might be found in his interpretation of the specificity of Hegel's dialectic itself. Plekhanov appreciated Hegel's definition of the 'dialectical moment', which he actually marked in his copy of the *Encyclopaedia*:

> the dialectical element ... is in general the principle of any movement, of any life and any active engagement in effective reality. The dialectical element is the soul of any really scientific knowledge as well.[7]

Although he considered the 'dialectical moment', the 'negation', to be the 'soul' of Hegel's dialectic, [1910e, p.547] Plekhanov, in the last analysis, fundamentally misunderstood Hegel's conception of negation. Plekhanov interpreted the idea of negation as the progressive element in the development of reality and thought, [1897c, p.449] as the real 'engine' of development. In Plekhanov's opinion, however, negation had to do more with the concept of logical opposition on the one hand and the idea of reciprocal action as 'struggle' of independent terms on the other, than with the concept of 'mediation'.

According to Hegel, the negative was properly the "mediating element, since it contains itself and the Immediate which it is the negation of".[8] In Plekhanov's opinion, on the contrary, the negative relationship between two determinations left them basically unchanged: it meant no more than a reciprocal interaction. One might say that, in his understanding of Hegel's dialectic, Plekhanov remained on the position of Hegel's "logic of the essence", never really paying attention to his "logic of concept": the relationship of the reciprocally conflictual interaction Plekhanov meant as 'negation', in Hegelian language is, indeed, nothing more than a 'determination of reflection', whose basic fault is precisely its 'immediateness'.

If it is wholly understandable that Plekhanov did not share Hegel's enthusiasm for the speculative moment of the Idea, the fact that he only considered some aspects of the latter's logic, though he often valued it highly, is not without consequences for his own understanding of Marx' thought and, particularly, of his epistemology. Plekhanov often declared that dialectics had to be the foundation of the Marxist theory of knowledge. That would have meant, however, that the relationship between the knowing subject and the known object, though it undoubtedly involves the subject's 'natural' being, was to be considered at the level of the dialectical mediation between the historical subject and its equally historical object, that Marx' idea of praxis implies. In his *Theses on Feuerbach*, in fact, Marx blamed all the earlier materialists precisely for having conceived reality as something 'given', instead of something 'made'. He wrote:

> The main defect of all materialism up to now - Feuerbach's included - is that it has conceived the object, the reality, the sensibility only as object or as intuition; never as sensible human activity, praxis, or

> subjectively. As a result the active side has been developed by idealism in contrast with materialism, - but only abstractly, since idealism of course disregards real, sensible activity as such.[9]

Through the concept of praxis, Marx precisely aimed at saving both the materialistic idea of reality as external and independent of consciousness and the idealistic idea of the subject's production of the objects themselves. According to Marx, nature was no longer something 'given' as the external environment of society, wholly separated from the latter: the Stoffwechsel between nature and society, that human being "mediates, regulates and controls through his own activity",[10] meant, on the contrary, the reciprocal mediation of both. The whole of nature was mediated by society, and the latter was, being in its turn a moment of all reality, mediated by nature. In Alfred Schmidt's words: "The different social-economic formations, which follow one another within history, are as many forms of the mediation of nature with itself".[11]

If therefore, according to Marx, nature was 'made' much more than it was 'given', human knowledge could not be merely a passive reflection of objective structures. Moreover, since the mediation of nature with itself through human society changes its form within the history, the form of knowledge, as historical itself, cannot be considered once and for all, leaving its concrete contents out of consideration.[12]

Plekhanov would probably have agreed with both of those conclusions since he firmly believed that his epistemology could clear up a much more complex interlacing of subject and object than a simple 'reflection'; and he always criticized the idea of an unchangeable human nature. But Plekhanov had founded his whole theory of knowledge on his belief in nature as something basically different from society and 'given' once and for all. Acknowledging changes within 'historical' human nature, he nevertheless always considered them to happen at the 'natural' level of biological evolution.

Such a conception implied meaningful consequences as regards the concept of praxis. As Plekhanov repeatedly recalled, Marx and Engels insisted that praxis had to be considered both the foundation of knowledge and the criterion of its truth.[13] Alfred Schmidt clearly explained the meaning of this conception:

> praxis in general can be the criterion of truth only because, as an historical whole, it constitutes the object of the common human experience, and is essentially part of the latter's internal structure.[14]

In contrast, within Plekhanov's theory of knowledge, praxis had two main functions, both of which were grounded in - and, in their turn, contributed to - a 'naturalistic' understanding of man and of his relationship with his environment. First of all, Plekhanov considered praxis to be a moment in the struggle for life by the human organism, in the latter's transforming and, at the same time, adapting to his environment. Secondly, Plekhanov interpreted Engels' opinion to mean that praxis was the criterion of the truth of our knowledge, because it provides us with the chance to 'retrospectively' establish the correspondence between the properties of reality and the contents of our thought, which has however its last and fundamental guarantee in the biological structure of the human organism. In both cases praxis remained basically external to the theory.[15] This means, in Vittorio Strada's words, that "in order to exorcize the ghost of solipsism and 'to prove' the existence of the world, materialistic dialectics was committed to a naturalistic metaphysics".[16]

Yet it was precisely the naturalistic metaphysics, with its 'unilaterality' and immediateness, that Plekhanov aimed at rejecting and avoiding. As I hope I have succeeded in showing, this gap between his intentions and his results was by no means a 'personal' failure; it was rather inherent in his own cultural background. In Plekhanov's epistemology, the dialectics did not transcend the limits of his philosophical and scientific referents: Feuerbach's anthropological materialism, on the one hand, Sečenov's physiology, on the other. This study of the genesis and development of Plekhanov's epistemology aims precisely at contributing to the clarification of the specificity of a thought, which cannot at all be considered already wholly defined by its being 'Marxist'. On the contrary, only by inquiring into its nuances and peculiarities, by inserting it into its original milieu, can we achieve a real understanding of the characteristics of Plekhanov's thought and, more generally, of that Marxism, of which Plekhanov had been the 'Father'.

NOTES

INTRODUCTION

1. Baron employed this expression in his book, which is the first (and only) Western monograph on Plekhanov: Samuel H. Baron, *Plekhanov. The Father of Russian Marxism*, Stanford (California), Stanford U.P., 1963. See also Isaiah Berlin, 'Le "père" du marxisme russe', *Le contrat social*, 1957 (I), pp.293-297.

2. Baron did not pay special attention to Plekhanov's thought in his biography, which focused mostly on Plekhanov's political activity. On Plekhanov's esthetics see, for instance: L. Baxandall, 'Marxism and Aesthetics: A Critique of the Contribution of George Plekhanov', *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, 1966-1967 (25), pp.267-279.

3. L. Trotsky, 'Beglye mysli o G.V. Plekhanove', *Pod znamenem marksizma* (henceforeward *PZM*), 1922, 5-6, p.10.

4. S.Ja. Vol'fson, *G.V. Plekhanov*, Minsk 1924; V. Vaganian, *G.V. Plekhanov*, M. 1924. See S.H. Baron, *op.cit.*, p.VII.

5. 'Pis'mo tov. Stalina, rešenija XVII Vsesojuznoj Konferencii i filosofskij front', *PZM*, 1931, 9-10, pp.7-8.

6. *Spravočnik partijnogo rabotnika*, M. 1957, pp.365-366. Plekhanov was born on November 29 (December, 11), 1856.

7. G.V. Plekhanov, *Izbrannye filosofskie proizvedenija*, M. 1956-1958, 5 vv.; *Sočinenija*, M.-Pg. 1923-1927, 24 vv.

8. A.F. Okulov, 'Bor'ba G.V. Plekhanova protiv neokantianskoj revizii marksizma', *Voprosy filosofii* (henceforth *VF*), 1956, 6, p.23.

9. On Plekhanov's fortune, see below, Appendix.

10. N.T. Sorokina noticed it in 1960 [*Voprosy teorii poznanija v filosofskikh rabotakh G.V. Plekhanova (1898-1911 gg.)*, Avtoreferat, Gorky, 1960, p.3]. Since then, the situation has not changed very much.

11. V.I. Lenin, *Materializm i empiriokriticizm, in Pol'noe sobranie sočinenij* (henceforth *PSS*), iz. 5-oe, M., 1958-..., t.18, pp. 244-251.

CHAPTER ONE

1. Plekhanov's move from Populism to Marxism is one of the

most intriguing and complicated moments in his intellectual biography. See S.H. Baron, *op.cit.*, pp.59-77; L. Deutsch, 'Kak Plekhanov stal marksistom', *Proletarskaja Revoljucija*, 1922, 7, pp.97-140.

2. P. Struve, 'My Conflicts and Contacts with Lenin', *The Slavonic and East European Review*, XII, p.579, quoted in Baron, *op.cit.*, p.142. On Plekhanov's *Naši raznoglasija* [1884] see also V.I. Lenin, *Čto takoe "druz'ja naroda" i kak oni vojujut protiv social-demokratov?* [Who are the "Friends of the People" and How do They War against Social Democrats?], in *PSS*, t.1, pp.196-198; N. Valentinov, *The Early Years of Lenin*, tr. R.H.W. Theen, Ann Arbor, Univ. of Michigan Press, 1969, p. 88.

3. *Friedrich Engels Briefwechsel mit Karl Kautsky*, hrsg. von B. Kautsky, 2. Ausg., Wien, Danubia Verlag, 1955, p.320.

4. *Arkhiv Doma Plekhanova* [henceforth *ADP*], AP.12.1, in I.N. Kurbatova, 'Predislovie', in *Katalog biblioteki G.V. Plekhanova*, vyp.I, L. 1965, p.VI.

5. S.H. Baron, *op.cit.*, p.66.

6. A. Walicki, 'Il problema della rivoluzione russa in Plechanov', tr. L. Tulli, *Annali*, Istituto G.G. Feltrinelli, Milano, 1973 (XV), p.461. To compare Plekhanov's opinions on the relationship between freedom and necessity with Spinoza's, Schelling's and Hegel's, see: 1895a, pp.590-596; 1898a, pp.300-311; 1908a, pp.189-191.

7. Plekhanov held this opinion all his life. See, for instance: 1880, pp.137-149; 1883, pp.21-23; 1902b, pp.207-208. On this subject, see also N. Harding, 'Introduction', in *Marxism in Russia. Key Documents 1879-1906*, Cambridge, Cambridge U. P., 1983, pp.1-3; 13-15; 38.

8. See B.A. Čagin - I.N. Kurbatova, *Plekhanov*, M., 1973, p.140; R.Ju. Gubajdullin, *Metodologičeskie osnovy kritiki G.V. Plekhanovym narodničestva (1893-1895 gg.)*, Avtoreferat, Kazan' 1968, p.5.

9. V. Strada, 'Materialismo e dialettica nel marxismo di Plechanov', *Annali*, Istituto G.G. Feltrinelli, Milano, 1973 (XV), p.480.

10. See G.W.F. Hegel, *Wissenschaft der Logik*, in *Sämtliche Werke*, hrsg. von H. Glockner, Stuttgart, Fr. Fromman, 1927-1940, Bd.IV, pp.137-138.

11. See G.W.F. Hegel, *op.cit.*, Bd.IV, p.609. There is a very meaningful difference between the original German text and Plekhanov's Russian paraphrase. Hegel wrote: "daß ich den ersten und zweiten Schlag einer Uhr als succedirend ... bestimme"; Plekhanov did

not use the verb *opredelit'* (to determine), but *vosprinimat'* (to perceive). Actually in his reception and understanding of Kantianism the *a priori* elements, as 'physiological' structures, were 'forms' of perception and not 'forms' of intellect. See below, Ch. 2, IV; Ch. 3, III.A.

12. I.M. Sečenov, 'Predmetnaja mysl' i dejstvitel'nost'' [Objective Thought and Reality], in *Izbrannye filosofskie i psikhologičeskie proizvedenija, M., 1947, pp.350, 359.*

13. F. Engels, *Ludwig Feuerbach und der Ausgang der klassischen deutschen Philosophie*, in Marx-Engels, *Werke*, Berlin, Dietz Verlag, 1961-1967, Bd.21, p.276.

14. See below, Appendix.

15. O.G. Mazaeva, *Voprosy sub"ekto-ob"ektnykh otnošenij v trudakh G.V. Plekhanova*, Avtoreferat, Tomsk 1976, pp.6-7. According to the author, the second conception should prevail, not because it is more frequent, but because it is much deeper and more meaningful. On this problem, see below, Conclusion.

16. See K. Marx, *Das Kapital*, in Marx-Engels, *Werke*, Bd.23, pp.192-193.

17. In English in the original.

18. L.E. Obolenskij, 'Predislovie', in G. Tarde, *Sušč̌nost' iskusstva*, tr. L.E. Obolenskij, SPb 1895, pp.9-10. See also V.V. Vel'janovič, *Psikho-fiziologičeskie osnovanija estetiki*, SPb, 1878.

19. For a polemic reference in the text, see, for instance, 1899c, p.7. Besides that, V.G. Astakhov's opinion supports this interpretation [see his *G.V. Plekhanov i N.G. Chernyshevsky*, Stalinabad, 1961, pp.257-259].

20. Among the Western scholars, e.g.: G. Pacini, 'Il pensiero estetico in Plechanov', in G.V. Plechanov, *Scritti di estetica*, Roma, Samonà e Savelli, 1972, pp.19-23; among the Soviet ones: V.G. Astachov, *op.cit.*, pp.263-270; V.G. Astakhov, 'G.V. Plekhanov ob estetičeskom čuvstve', *Učenye zapiski Tadžikskogo Universiteta*, 1959, 19, vyp.3, p.29.

21. Mazaeva thinks that this is a general conception: 'Vzgliady G.V. Plekhanova na prirodu poznanija', in *Zakonomernosti razvitija sovremennoj nauki*, Tomsk 1981, p.217.

22. F. Staudinger, 'Der Streit um das Ding an sich und seine Erneuerung im sozialistischen Lager', *Kantstudien*, Berlin 1899, pp.167-189.

23. K. Schmidt, 'Ein neues Buch über die materialistische Geschichtsauffassung', *Der sozialistische Akademiker*, 1896, 7, pp.399-407; 8, pp.475-482.

24. Samuel H. Baron insists on the psychological reasons for

Plekhanov's polemics against revisionism [S.H. Baron, *op.cit.*, p.175]. Claude Weill, whose authoritative work is often recalled in this paragraphe, does not wholly agree with Baron, rather insisting on the importance that Plekhanov attached to theoretical orthodoxy by itself [C. Weill, *Marxistes russes et socialdémocratie allemande. 1898-1904*, Paris, Maspero, 1977, p.105].

25. Plekhanov had undoubtedly a special inclination for polemics. Osip went so far as to state that for Plekhanov it was a "cunning means of knowledge" [V.G. Osip, *Gnoseologičeskie problemy gumanitarnykh nauk v teoretičeskom nasledii G.V. Plekhanova*, Avtoreferat, Gorky 1979, p.12].

26. A.M. Voden, 'Vospominanija. Besedy s Engels'om', in *Russkie sovremenniki o K. Marx'e i F. Engels'e*, M. 1969, pp.103-104.

27. E. Bernstein, 'Das realistische und das ideologische Moment im Sozialismus', *Die Neue Zeit*, Jg.XVI, Bd.II, p.226 note.

28. *ADP*, Fond N° 1093, Ed.khr. T.68, p.2.

29. On the relationship between Rosa Luxemburg and Plekhanov, see J.P. Nettl, *Rosa Luxemburg*, London, Oxford U.P., 1966, *passim*, in particular v.I, pp.68-69.

30. *Protokoll über die Verhandlungen des Parteitages der Sozialdemokratischen Partei Deutschlands, abgehalten zu Stuttgart, vom 3. bis 8. Oktober 1898*, Berlin, Vorwärts, 1898, p.130. Kautsky replied to Plekhanov's open letter with a short note: 'In eigener Sache', *Die Neue Zeit*, Jg.XVII, Bd.I, p.220.

31. *Protokoll...*, pp.126-130; 132-135.

32. S.H. Baron, *op.cit.*, pp.192-194.

33. R. Luxemburg, *Briefe an Leon Jogisches*, Frankfurt am Main, Europäische Verlagsanstalt, 1971, p.104.

34. Labriola to Kautsky, 8.X.1898, *Kautsky Nachlaß*, International Instituut voor Sociale Geschiedenis, K.D. 439, quoted in Bo Gustafsson, *Marxismus und Revisionismus. Eduard Bernsteins Kritik des Marxismus und ihre ideen-geschichtlichen Voraussetzungen*, Frankfurt am Main, Europäische Verlagsanstalt, 1972, v.II, p.422.

35. K. Schmidt, 'Einige Bemerkungen über Plechanows letzten Artikel in der *Neuen Zeit*', *Die Neue Zeit*, Jg.XVII, Bd.I, pp.324-334. On Plekhanov's judgement, see also his letter to Ljubov' Aksel'rod, 1898.XII.15.

36. K. Schmidt, 'Was ist Materialismus?', *Die Neue Zeit*, Jg.XVII, Bd.I, pp.697-698.

37. K. Kautsky, 'Bernstein und die materialistische

Geschichtsauffassung', *Die Neue Zeit*, Jg.XVII, Bd.II, pp.4-16; 'Bernstein und die Dialektik', *Die Neue Zeit*, Jg.XVII, Bd.II, pp.36-50.

38. A. Nedow (A.M. Voden), 'Plechanow versus Ding an sich', *Sozialistische Monatshefte*, 1899, 3, pp.104-112; Chajm Schitlowsky, 'Die Polemik Plechanow contra Stern und Conrad Schmidt', *Sozialistische Monatshefte*, 1899, 5, pp.277-283; 6, pp.322-331.

39. Longuet probably meant the first version of Plekhanov's article '*Cant* protiv Kanta ili dukhovnoe zaveščanie g. Bernstein'a', published after various re-writings in *Zarja*. [1901b]

40. E. Bernstein, *Wie ist wissenschaftlicher Sozialismus möglich?*, Berlin, Verlag der Sozialistischen Monatshefte, 1901.

41. See above, on Wilhelm Liebknecht's and Rosa Luxemburg's attitudes towards Plekhanov's positions. During the 1930's Soviet scholars blamed Plekhanov for having reduced his criticism of revisionism to an "academic dispute", by overemphasizing its philosophical aspects. See below, Appendix.

42. E. Bernstein, 'Das realistische und das ideologische Moment im Sozialismus', p.227. It is not by chance that this article aroused Plekhanov's particular interest and indignation. There [pp.226 note, 228] Bernstein referred to Schmidt, Stern, Schitlowsky, Labriola, Croce, Sorel as philosophical "authorities".

43. *Ibid.* p.227 note.

44. W. Strecker, *Welt und Menschheit und Menscheit vom Standpunkt des Materialismus*, Leipzig, 1894, pp.14-15. As regards Plekhanov's statement about Engels' likely agreement with Strecker, Soviets scholars think that this was a very serious 'mistake' of 'agnostic' attitude. E.g., among many others, S. Batiščev, 'Recenzija: G.V. Plekhanov, «Protiv filosofskogo revizionizma»', *PZM*, 1936, 5, p.168 and the notes in Plekhanov's *Izbrannye filosofskie proizvedenija*, t.II, p.764.

45. E. Bernstein, *Die Voraussetzungen des Sozialismus und die Aufgaben der Sozialdemokratie*, Stuttgart, Dietz, 1899, pp.21-22. See also Plekhanov's notes. [1938h, pp.141-142] On Plekhanov's conception of dialectics, see below, Ch. 1, II.D and Conclusion.

46. It is interesting to compare this passage with the following variant: "The concepts are not identical with the phenomena on the grounds of which they are formed. And equally the reciprocal struggle of signs in our concepts is not identical with the antagonism of forces in the phenomenon. But our concept of any given phenomenon must include *signs*, that correspond to the *properties* of this phenomenon. The fuller this correspondence is, the more fully the signs of concept

exhaust the properties of phenomenon, the better this phenomenon is *understood.*" [1938e, pp.130-131 note]

47. J. Stern, 'Der ökonomische und der naturphilosophische Materialismus', *Die Neue Zeit*, Jg. XV, Bd.II, p.302. Bernstein also insisted that the rise of consciousness cannot be explained from a materialistic standpoint. See E. Bernstein, *op.cit.*, pp.44-45 note, and Plekhanov's reply. [1901b, p.383]

48. J. Stern, *op.cit.*, p.303. Particularly Stern quoted the 57th *Vorlesung über die Mensch- und Tierseele* by W. Wundt. As for Stern's lecture of Spinoza, see below, Ch. 2, II.

49. Such a statement, of course, aroused Bernstein's criticism. [*loc.cit.*]

50. E. Bernstein, *loc.cit.;* Ch. Schitlowsky, *op.cit.*, p.283; Ja. Berman, 'Marksizm ili makhizm', *Obrazovanie*, 1906, 11a, p.60; R. Luxemburg, *op.cit.*, p.104.

51. K. Schmidt, 'Ein neues Buch über die materialistische Geschichtsauffassung'; K. Schmidt, 'Über Krönenbergs Buch: «Kant, sein Leben und seine Lehre»', *Vorwärts*, 17 Okt. 1897, 3.Beilage. The latter is not to be found in the bibliography, since unfortunately we have no direct knowledge of it.

52. "Not Hegel's dialectical-evolutionistic metaphysics, but Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason* is the representative work of idealism." [K. Schmidt, 'Ein neues Buch...', p.401]

53. *Ibid.* p.400.

54. *Ibid.* p.401.

55. *Ibid.* pp.401-402.

56. K. Schmidt, 'Einige Bemerkungen über Plechanows letzten Artikel in der *Neuen Zeit*', p.327.

57. *Ibid.* p.328.

58. Here Plekhanov referred to a passage of Kant's *Prolegomena* (13). See below, Ch. 2, IV.

59. K. Schmidt, *op.cit.*, p.329.

60. *Ibid.* p.330.

61. *Loc.cit.*

62. *Ibid.* pp.325-326.

63. *Loc.cit.*

64. *Loc.cit.*

65. As a proof Plekhanov referred to Kant's *Erklärung im Beziehung auf Fichtes Wissenschaftslehre* and to the second edition of his *Critique* which, according to Plekhanov, had been revised in a more 'realistic' sense. See below, Ch. 2, IV.

66. K. Schmidt, 'Was ist Materialismus?', p.698.

67. K. Marx, *Das Kapital*, in Marx-Engels, *Werke*, Bd.23, p.27.

68. K. Schmidt, *op.cit.*, p.698.

69. See A.M. Voden, 'Na zare "legal'nogo marksizma" (Iz vospominanij)', *Letopisi marksizma*, 1927, 3, p.68.

70. A. Nedow, 'Plechanow versus Ding an sich', p.111.

71. *Ibid.* pp.108-109.

72. *Ibid.* p.110.

73. A.M. Voden, 'Na zare...', p.79.

74. *Ibid.* p.81. Later, in 1901, Voden came back to be on good terms with Plekhanov [see *ibid.* p.80].

75. *Ibid.* p.82.

76. *Loc.cit.*; see also A.M. Voden 'Vospominanija. Besedy s Engels'om', pp.99-101.

77. F. Engels, *Anti-Dühring*, in Marx-Engels, *Werke*, Bd.20, pp.80-86.

78. L.I. Aksel'rod (Ortodoks), 'Opyt kritika kriticizma'(1900) [Essay of Critique of Criticism], in *Filosofskie očerki*, SPb 1906, p.216.

79. L.I. Aksel'rod, 'Dvojstvennaja istina v sovremennoj nemeckoj filosofii' [Double Truth in German Contemporary Philosophy], in *op.cit.*, p.32.

80. L.I. Aksel'rod, 'O nekotorykh filosofskikh upražnenijakh nekotorykh "kritikov"' (1902) [On Some Philosophical Exercises of Some 'Critics'], in *op.cit.*, pp.165-166.

81. See L. Khinčuk, 'K vospominanijam o G.V. Plekhanove', *Proletarskaja Revoljucija*, 1922, 8, p.215; L.I. Aksel'rod, *Etjudy i vospominanija*, L,. 1925, p.24.

82. Ch. Schitlowsky, 'Die Polemik Plechanow contra Stern und Conrad Schmidt', p.279.

83. *Ibid.* p.331.

84. Ch. Schitlowsky, 'Die Widerspruchlogik bei Hegel und Marx', *Deutsche Worte*, Jg.XVI, 7-8, pp.337-372. The article came out in a later Russian version: N.G., 'Materializm i dialektičeskaja logika', *Russkoe Bogatstvo*, 1898, 6, pp.59-82; 7, pp.83-103. A few years later it came out an extended edition with the same title: *Materializm i dialektičeskaja logika*, M., 1907. Plekhanov read and annotated both the German and the Russian versions of Schitlowsky's article. [*Biblioteka Doma Plekhanova*, henceforth *BDP*, L,.12050; 1974d]

85. Ch. Schitlowsky, 'Materializm i dialektičeskaja logika', p.92.

86. E. Bernstein, 'Dialektik und Entwicklung', *Die Neue Zeit*,

Jg. XVII, Bd.II, pp.330-331.

87. P.B. Struve, *Kritičeskie zametki k voprosu ob ekonomičeskom razvitii Rossii*, SPb, 1894, pp.34-35 notes, 46.

88. See R. Pipes, *Struve. Liberal on the Left, 1870-1905*, Cambridge (Mass.), Harvard U.P., 1970, pp.55-57.

89. P.B. Struve, *Na raznye temy. 1893-1901*, SPb 1902, pp.301-302.

90. On Struve's and Plekhanov's different views on populism, see V. Strada, 'Introduzione', in V.I. Lenin, *Che fare? Problemi scottanti del nostro movimento*, trs. C. and V. Strada, Torino, Einaudi, 1971, pp.XXI-XXV, XXXIV-XLI, XLV-LIX.

91. V. Strada, 'Il "marxismo legale" in Russia', in *Storia del marxismo*, v.II, Torino, Einaudi, 1979, p.398.

92. See V.I. Lenin, *Ekonomičeskoe soderžanie narodničestva i kritika ego v knige g. Struve* [The Economic Contents of Populism and its Critique in Mr. Struve's Book], in *PSS*, t.1, pp.347-534. Many Soviet scholars have insisted on Lenin's 'foresight' and perspicacity, since, according to them, in 1895 he had already grasped the germs of Struve's future liberalism, in order to blame Plekhanov for his late polemicizing against 'legal Marxists'. See, e.g., V.P. Fedotov, 'Bor'ba G.V. Plekhanova protiv filosofskogo revizionizma bernštejniancev i "legal'nykh marksistov"', in *Rasprostranenie idej marksistskoj filosofii v Evrope. Konec XIX - načalo XX vv.*, L., 1964, pp.142-143. R. Pipes, on the contrary, points out that Lenin's reaction was rather late. [see *op.cit.*, pp.240-245]

93. This volume was entitled: *Materialy dlja istorii našego khozjajstvennogo razvitija* [Materials for the History of our Economic Development]. Lenin wrote for this collective work the quoted article against Struve; Plekhanov wrote 'Neskol'ko slov našim protivnikam'. [1895b]

94. See below, Appendix.

95. S.H. Baron, *op.cit.*, p.167.

96. *Ibid.* pp.192-195.

97. E. Bernstein, *Die Voraussetzungen...*, p.170.

98. S.H. Baron, *op.cit.*, pp.205-207.

99. V.I. Lenin, letter to A.N. Potresov, 2.IX.1898, in *PSS*, t.46, p.15.

100. S.H. Baron, *op.cit.*, pp.216-218. On the attitude that Lenin and Plekhanov showed towards Struve in different times, see also R. Pipes, *op.cit.*, pp.237-241; 257-259; 266-268.

101. P. Struve, 'Die Marxsche Theorie der sozialen Entwicklung', in *Archiv für soziale Gesetzgebung und Statistik*,

1899, XIV, pp.658-704.

102. Plekhanov's three articles against Struve appeared under the common title: 'Kritika našikh kritikov. Čast' I: G-n P. Struve v roli kritika marksovoj teorii obščestvennogo razvitija'. The words 'First part' let us know that Plekhanov had it in his mind to write other articles on the same subject.

103. P. Struve, 'Svoboda i istoričeskaja neobkhodimost'', *VFP*, 1897, 36 (1), pp.124-125.

104. A.M. Voden, 'Na zare "legal'nogo marksizma"', p.74; English translation by R. Pipes, *op.cit.*, p.57.

105. R. Pipes, *op.cit.*, p.59; P.B. Struve, *Kritičeskie zametki*, p.128.

106. P. Struve, 'Die Marxsche Theorie...', p.679.

107. Kant, *Kritik der reinen Vernunft,* A^2: 254, in *Gesammelte Schriften*, hrsg. von d. Kön. Pr. Akademie der Wissenschaften, Berlin, G. Reimer, 1902-..., Bd.III, p.179; quoted in Struve, *op.cit.*, pp.680-681.

108. P. Struve, *op.cit.*, p.682.

109. *Ibid.* p.683.

110. *Ibid.* p.687.

111. See, e.g.: S. Batiščev, 'Recenzija: G.V. Plekhanov: «Protiv filosofskogo revizionizma»', p.176; A. Vostrikov, 'Bor'ba Lenina protiv neokantianskoj revizii marksizma v Rossii', *PZM*, 1940, 8, p.136.

112. Against Nikolaj Berdjaev, who as of 1900 had declared himself in favour of phenomenism in epistemology ['F.A. Lange i kritičeskaja filosofija', *Mir Božij*, 1900, 7, pp.224-225, published in German version as well: 'F.A. Lange und die kritische Philosophie in ihren Beziehungen zum Sozialismus', *Die Neue Zeit,* Jg.XVIII, Bd.II, pp.132-140, 164-174, 196-207; see also N. Berdjaev, *Sub"ektivizm i individualizm v obščestvennoj filosofii*, SPb, 1901, esp. pp.23-24], L. Aksel'rod wrote an article entitled 'Počemu my ne khotim idti nazad' [Why We do not want to go back] in *Zarja*, 1901, 2-3, pp.38-59, later in *Filosofskie očerki*, pp.93-129. Against Peter Struve she adressed an already quoted article: 'O nekotorykh filosofskikh upraznenijakh nekotorykh "kritikov"', which came out in the 4th number of *Zarja*, later in *Filosofsie očerki*, pp.130-170.

113. See, for example, Vera Zasulič, 'Elementy idealizma v socializme', *Zarja*, 1901, 2-3, pp.303-323; 4, pp.75-100; F. Bersenev [F. Dan], 'Nečto o kriterii istiny (Pis'mo v redakciju)', *Russkaja mysl'*, 1901, 7, pp.123-143.

114. S.H. Baron, *op.cit.*, p.208.

115. *Ibid.* p.257.

116. *Loc.cit.*; A. Lunacharsky, 'Neskol'ko vstreč s G.V. Plekhanovym', *PZM*, 1922, 5-6, pp.87-89.

117. S.H. Baron, *op.cit.*, p.257. See also R.M. Kantor - I. Volkovičer, 'G.V. Plekhanov i demonstracija na Kazanskoj ploščadi 6 dekabrja 1876 g.', *Proletarskaja Revoljucija*, 1924, 4 (27), pp.254-258; *FNP*, I, p.280 n.14.

118. According to Gorky, a worker had defined them in these words during the Fifth Congress of the Party (1907): Maksim Gorky, 'V.I. Lenin', in *Vospominanija o Vladimire Iliče Lenine*, t.I, M. 1956, p.372.

119. V.I. Lenin, *Kak čut' li ne potukhla "Iskra"?* [How the 'Spark' Almost Went Out], in *PSS*, t.4, p.343.

120. I. Getzler, 'Georgij V. Plechanov: la dannazione dell'ortodossia', in *Storia del marxismo*, v.II, Torino, Einaudi, 1979, p.423; N. Valentinov, *Vstreči s Leninym*, New York, izd.-vo Čekhova, 1953, pp.245-250; E.E. Essen, 'V Ženeve, v Klaranc i v Peterburge', in *Vospominanija o V.I. Lenine*, t.III, M. 1960, p.32.

121. S.H. Baron, *op.cit.*, pp.209-216, 223-230.

122. V.I. Lenin, *Eščе o profsojuzakh, o tekuščem momente i ob ošibkakh tt. Trotskogo i Bukharina* [Again on Trade Unions, the Present Situation and the Errors of Comrades Trotsky and Bukharin], in *PSS*, t.42, p.290. See also below, Appendix.

123. S.H. Baron, *op.cit.*, pp.242-246.

124. Here Plekhanov meant the results of the London (Bolshevik) Congress and the Geneva Menshevik Conference. For Hegel's quotation, see: G.W.F. Hegel, *Schriften zur Politik und Rechtsphilosophie*, hrsg. G. Lasson, 2. Aufl., Leipzig, Felix Meiner Verlag, 1923, p.XIV. Plekhanov probably knew this passage through Rudolf Haym, *Hegel und seine Zeit*, Berlin, R. Gaertner, 1857, pp. 65 and *passim.*

125. A. Bogdanov, *Priključenija odnoj filosofskoj školy*, SPb, 1908, p.24.

126. P.S. Škurinov, *Pozitivizm v Rossii XIX veka*, M., 1980, pp.243-251; N.F. Utkina, *Pozitivizm, antropologičeskij materializm i nauka v Rossii (vtoraja polovina XIX veka)*, M., 1975, pp.123-126.

127. Filippov's contribute came out later in the authoritative review he edited: 'O filosofii čistogo opyta (Soobščenie pročitannoe v Filosofskom Obščestve)', *Naucnoe Obozrenie*, 1898, 5, pp.924-937; 6, 1054-1069. Lesevič came closer to empirio-criticism in *Pis'ma o naučnoj filosofii* [Letters on Scientific Philosophy] (1878) and *Čto*

takoe naučnaja filosofija? [Which is the Scientific Philosophy?] (1891) [see Shkurinov, *op.cit.*, pp.275-288]. On his influence on young revolutionaries, see: A.V. Lunacharsky, *Vospominanija i vpecatlenija*, M,. 1968, pp.19-20; N. Valentinov, *Vstrečy s Leninym*, p.220; and, among the social-revolutionaries, V.M. Černov, *Pered burej. Vospominanija*, New York, izd.-vo Čekhova, 1953, p.94.

128. N. Valentinov, *op.cit.*, p.220; A. Lunacharsky, *Etjudy kritičeskie i polemičeskie*, M., 1905, pp.III-V.

129. Bogdanov later blamed Plekhanov in these terms [*Prikljuchenija...*, p.25].

130. A.A. Bogdanov, *Osnovnye elementy istoričeskogo vzgljada na prirodu*, SPb, 1899; P.S. Juškevič, 'Sovremennaja energetika s točki zrenija empiriosimvolizma', in *Ocerki po filosofii marksizma*, SPb 1908, pp.162-214.

131. K.M. Jensen, *Beyond Marx and Mach. Aleksandr Bogdanov's "Philosophy of Living Experience"*, Dordrecht-Holland, Reidel Pub.Co., 1978, pp.10-14.

132. P.S. Juškevič, 'Na temu dnja (K voprosu o filosofskom broženii v marksizme)', *Veršiny*, 1909, I, p.371.

133. A.A. Bogdanov, *Empiriomonizm. Kniga III*, SPb, 1906, p.XLI.

134. A.A. Bogdanov, *Empiriomonizm. Stat'i po filosofii*, M., 1904, p.8.

135. A.A. Bogdanov, 'Čego iskat' russkomu čitatelju u Ernst'a Mach'a?', in E. Mach, *Analiz oščuščenij i otnošenie fizičeskogo k psikhičeskomu*, tr. G. Kotljar, M,. 1907, p.IX-X.

136. P.S. Juškevič, 'Na temu dnja...', pp.367-368.

137. *ADP*, Fond N° 1093, Ed.khr. T.186, p.33.

138. See G.W.F. Hegel, *Wissenschaft der Logik*, in *Sämtliche Werke*, Bd.IV, pp.603-607.

139. It is worth noticing that in Russian the verb 'to see' (*videt'*) has the same root as the word 'appearance, species, kind' (*vid*). Plekhanov meant to use a precise Russian philosophical vocabulary, therefore often imposing a close correspondence between Russian and German terms. So, for instance, he rigorously kept the term 'forma' (form) to mean the Hegelian *Form* (as in *Encyclopädie der philosophischen Wissenschaften im Grundrisse*, I, 133), while he preferred '*obraz*' (form, appearance, image) and '*vid*', to mean the external form (*Gestalt, Aussehen*). See also K.G. Ballestrem, *Russian Philosophical Terminology*, Dordrecht-Holland, Reidel Pub.Co., 1964.

140. On the cover of the copy of Hegel's "Small Logic" in the

Dom Plekhanova Library a remark in Plekhanov's hand-writing reads: "in my opinion the appearance is the property, *im subjektiven Sinne aufgefasst.*" (*BDP*, B.3257)

141. Judging from Plekhanov's remarks and underlinings on his copies of Hegelian Logic preserved in the *Dom Plekhanova* Library, he particularly thought over the following passages: *Encyclopädie...* 125 and Z. (*BDP*, B.3257, p.254) and *Wissenschaft der Logik,* Zw. B., Zw. A., Erst. Kap. A.b (*BDP*, B.3235, pp.147-149).

142. G.W.F. Hegel, *Wissenschaft der Logik*, in *Sämtliche Werke*, Bd.IV, p.607.

143. Thus did Bogdanov summarize Plekhanov's views in *Empiriomonism. Kniga III*, p.XIV-XV.

144. Here Plekhanov probably referred to the "Small Logic" 133, that he had underlined and annotated (*BDP*, B.3257, p.264).

145. M.G. Jaroševskij, 'G.V. Plekhanov i I.M. Sečenov', *VF*, 1956, 6, p.216.

146. This is how Plekhanov judged Bogdanov's *Osnovnye elementy istoričeskogo vzgljada na prirodu* in a letter to the Münich editors of *Iskra.* Lenin had a higher opinion of this work [see his letter to A.N. Potresov, 27.VI.1899, in *PSS*, t.46, p.31].

147. I. Kant, *Kritik der reinen Vernunft*, A^1: 252, in *Gesammelte Schriften*, Bd.IV, pp.164-165. Plekhanov underlined this passage, and numerous signs on this page denote his attentive and repeated reading (*BDP*, B.3308, p.233). Plekhanov also transcribed this passage into a notebook, adding: "with regard to the *appearance* of things" (*ADP*, Fond N° 1093, Ed.khr. T.108).

148. According to Plekhanov, this *salto vitale* was to be opposed to the *salto mortale* (for the reason) that a coherent idealist, unavoidably solipsist, had to make in order to acknowledge his own mother's existence. [1905b, pp.486-487]

149. A. Lunacharsky, *Kritika čistogo opyta Avenarius'a v populjarnom izloženii*, M., 1905; N. Valentinov, *E. Mach i marksizm*, M. 1908. On the rapid spread of empirio-criticism in Russia, see also Ljubov' Aksel'rod's letter to Plekhanov, 1909.III.15/2.

150. A. Deborin, 'Recenzija: A. Bogdanov, «Empiriomonizm. Kniga III»', *Sovremennaja žizn'*, 1907, 1, pp.251-260; A. Deborin, 'Dialektičeskij materializm i empiriosimvolizm', *Sovemennyj mir*, 1908, 10, pp.123-134; A. Deborin, 'Recenzija: A. Bogdanov, *Prikljućenija odnoj filosofskoj školy*', *Sovremennyj mir*, 1909, 2, pp.168-170; N. Rakh[met]ov [O. Blum], *K filosofii marksizma*, Riga 1908; V.I. Lenin, *Materializm i empiriokriticizm*, in *PSS*, t.18.

151. A. Bogdanov, 'Otkrytoe pis'mo tov. Plekhanovu', *Vestnik*

žizni, 1907, 7, pp.46, 50-51; K. Kautsky, 'O Marx'e i Mach'e', *Vozroždenie*, 1909, 9-12, p.77 ('Über Marx und Mach', *Der Kampf*, 1909, 10, pp.451-452).

152. On the internal disputes in Russian social democracy, see G.D.H. Cole, *A History of Socialist Thought*, v.III: *The Second International 1899-1914*, London-New York, McMillan & Co. - St. Martin's Press, 1956, pp.478-479. As for Plekhanov's positions, S.H. Baron, *op.cit.*, pp.281-286.

153. 'Vormerkungen des Übersetzers' to A. Bogdanov, 'Ernst Mach und die Revolution', *Die Neue Zeit*, Jg. XXVI, Bd.I, pp.695-696. Plekhanov had been especially harsh in carrying on his 'factional' polemic. [e.g. 1907b, pp.401-402] Both Lenin and Bogdanov emphasized this characteristic of Plekhanov's articles [V.I. Lenin, letter to A.M. Gorky, in *PSS*, t.47, p.138; A. Bogdanov, 'Otkrytoe pis'mo tov. Plekhanovu', p.51]. Among Plekhanov's disciples' polemical works, see L.I. Aksel'rod (Ortodoks), 'Dva tečenija', in *Na rubeže (K kharakteristike sovremennykh iskanij)*, SPb 1909, pp.259-266.

154. 'Zajavlenie ot redakcii', *Proletarij*, 1908, 21, p.8. The same declaration thereafter came out on *Die Neue Zeit* ['Notizen: Mach in Russland', Jg.XXVI, Bd.I, p.898].

155. V.I. Lenin's letter to A.M. Gorky, 7.II.1908, in *PSS*, t.47, p.135. See also his intervention at the London Congress of the Party [*Tretij očerednoj s"ezd RSDRP. Pol'nyj tekst protokolov*, Geneva 1905, p.168].

156. V.I. Lenin's letter to A.M. Gorky, 24.III.1908, in *PSS*, t.47, p.151. On his "ignorance" about philosophical subjects, see Lenin's letters to A.M. Gorky, 7.II.1908, 25.II.1908, in *PSS*, t.47, pp.135, 145.

157. See J. Scherrer, 'Bogdanov e Lenin: il bolscevismo al bivio', in *Storia del marxismo*, v.II, Torino, Einaudi, 1979, pp.493-546; A.I. Volodin, *"Boj absoljutno neizbežen"*, M,. 1982.

158. A.A. Bogdanov, *Vera i nauka. (O knige V. Il'ina «Materializm i empiriokriticizm»)*, in *Padenie velikogo fetišizma*, M., 1910, pp.143-223; V. Bazarov, *Na dva fronta*, SPb, 1910, pp.XXI-XXXIX; P.S. Juškevič, *Stolpy filosofskoj ortodoksii*, SPb, 1910, pp.36-72; L.I. Aksel'rod (Ortodoks), 'Recenzija na knigu «Materializm i empiriokriticizm»', in V.I. Lenin, *Socinenija*, 3-oe iz., t.XIII, M.-L. 1928, pp.329-333. All these works are now wholly or partially available in Italian translation in: V. Strada (ed.), *Fede e scienza*, Torino, Einaudi, 1982.

159. See also A.I. Volodin, *op.cit.*, pp.157-161.

160. K. Kautsky, 'O Marx'e i Mach'e', p.78.

161. A.A. Bogdanov, *Priključenija odnoj filosofskoj školy*, p.4. On the same subject, see also his *Revoljucija i filosofija*, SPb 1905.

162. N. Potresov, 'Kritičeskie nabroski. O tom, počemu pustjaki odaleli', *Naša zarja*, 1910, 2, pp.58-62.

163. V. Bazarov, 'O tom, počemu važnye veščі kažutsja inogda pustjakami', *Naša zarja*, 1910, 4, p.85. This article met with L. Aksel'rod's criticism ['"Vesci v sebe" ne pustjaki' ('Things-in-themselves' are not Trifles), *Naša zarja*, 1910, 5-6, pp.8-18, later in *Protiv idealizma*, M.-Pg., 1922, pp.221-231] and N. Potresov's replay ['Kritičeskie nabroski. Ešče o likvidatorskom i filosofskom epizodakh', *Nasa zarja*, 1910, 4, pp.89-98].

164. N. Potresov, 'Kritičeskie nabroski. O tom, počemu pustjaki odaleli', p.61.

165. V. Lenin, 'Naši uprazdniteli. O t. Potresove i V. Bazarove' [Our Abolishers. On Comrade Potresov and V. Bazarov], in *PSS*, t.20, p.128.

166. N. Valentinov, *Filosofskie postroenija marksizma*, kn. I, M. 1908, p.191.

167. A. Deborin, 'Dialektičeskij materializm i empirio-simvolizm', pp.123-124. Bel'tov was one of Plekhanov's pseudonyms.

168. See, for example, Ja. Berman, 'Marksizm ili makhizm', pp.49-70.

169. V. Bazarov, 'Misticizm i realizm našego vremeni', in *Očerki po filosofii marksizma*, SPb 1908, p.71.

170. A.A. Bogdanov, *Vera i nauka*, p.199.

171. N. Valentinov, *op.cit.*, p.46; Ja. Berman, *op.cit.*, p.61.

172. P.S. Juškevič, *Materializm i kritičeskij realizm (O filosofskikh napravlenijakh v marksizme)*, SPb 1908, p.20.

173. A.A. Bogdanov, *op.cit.*, p.170.

174. V. Bazarov, *op.cit.*, p.12.

175. Ja. Berman, *op.cit.*, pp.53-62; N. Valentinov, *op.cit.*, pp.88-90; A.A. Bogdanov, *op.cit.*, pp.206-207.

176. V. Bazarov, *op.cit.*, p.14; N. Valentinov, *op.cit.*, p.62.

177. See S.H. Baron, *op.cit.*, pp.254-279.

178. A.A. Bogdanov, 'Otkrytoe pis'mo tov. Plekhanovu', p.50.

179. A.A. Bogdanov, *Priključenija odnoj filosofskoj školy*, pp.6-21.

180. L.I. Aksel'rod, 'Dvojstvennaja istina v sovremennoj nemeckoj filosofii', in *Filosofskie ocerki*, pp.73-77.

181. S.H. Baron, *op.cit.*, p.279.

182. See also *BDP*, B.3704, H. Rickert, *Nauki o prirode i nauki o kul'ture*, SPb, 1911, pp.90, 107, 113.

183. Deborin's book finally came out in 1916: *Vvedenie v filosofiju dialektičeskogo materializma*, Pg., 1916.

184. K. Kautsky, 'O Marx'e i o Mach'e', p.77; E. Mach, 'Predislovie avtora k russkomu izdaniju', in *Analiz oščuščenij i otnošenie fizičeskogo k psikhičeskomu*, M., 1907, p.4; P. Dauge, 'K russkomu izdaniju', in E. Untermann, *Antonio Labriola i Joseph Dietzgen. Opyt sravnenija istoričeskogo i monističeskogo materializma*, SPb, 1907, p.VIII. [1907a, p.110]

185. F. Engels, *Ludwig Feuerbach*, in Marx-Engels, *Werke*, Bd. 21, p.293; K. Marx, 'Briefe an L. Kugelmann, 7.XII.1867; 5.XII.1868', Bd.31, p.577; Bd. 32, p.579.

186. A. Bogdanov, 'Otkrytoe pis'mo tov. Plekhanovu', p.51.

187. See I. Gel'fond, 'Filosofija Dietzgen'a i sovremennyj pozitivizm', in *Očerki po filosofii marksizma*, pp.243-290; P.S. Juškevič, *Materializm i kritičeskij realizm*, pp.42-70; N. Valentinov, *Filosofskie postroenija marksizma*, pp.155-189; N. Andreev, 'Dialektičeskij materializm i filosofija J. Dietzgen'a', *Sovremennyj mir*, 1907, 11, pp.1-36.

188. K. Marx, 'Brief an L. Kugelmann, 5.XII.1868', p.579.

189. At that time Plekhanov's opinions about Dietzgen came also to Western Europe. Eugen Dietzgen translated Plekhanov's review and P. Dauge's introduction and published them in appendix in J. Dietzgen, *Erkenntis und Wahrheit*, Stuttgart, Dietz, 1908. While reviewing those article, Franz Mehring sided with Plekhanov [see *Die Neue Zeit*, Jg.XXVI, Bd.II, pp.430-432; and E. Dietzgen's reply, 'Nochmals Dietzgen', *Die Neue Zeit*, Jg.XXVI, Bd.II, pp.650-654].

190. For example, Bazarov translated: E. Boutroux, *Nauka i religija v sovremennoj filosofii* [Science et religion dans la philosophie contemporaine], SPb 1910; [1911b] R. Richter, *Skepticizm v filosofii,* [Der Skeptizismus in der Philosophie], t.I, trs. Bazarov and B. Stolpner, SPb 1910; [1911a] Juškevič edited: J. Petzoldt, *Problema mira s točki zrenija pozitivizma* [Das Weltproblem vom positivistischen Standpunkte aus], SPb 1909; [1910c] H. Klejnpeter, *Teorija poznanija sovremennogo estestvoznanija* [Die Erkenntnistheorie der Naturforschung der Gegenwart, unter Zugrundlegung der Anschauungen von Mach, Stallo, Clifford, Kirchoff, Hertz, Pearson und Ostwald], tr. R. Leiberk, SPb 1910; he translated W. James, *Pragmatizm. Novoe nazvanie dlja nekotorykh starikh metodov myšlenija* [Pragmatism: a New Name for Some Old Ways of Thinking. Popular Lectures on Philosophy], SPb 1910.

191. *BDP*, B.3737, P.S. Juškevič, *Materializm i kritičeskij realizm*, SPb, 1908; Ja. Berman, *Dialektika v svete sovremennoj teorii poznanija*, M. ,1908. [1974e] On the contrary, Plekhanov's jottings and signs on Bogdanov's works show that he attentively read them. See: B.3619, *Iz psikhologii obščestva. Stat'i 1901-1904 gg.*, M., 1904; B.3616, *Empiriomonizm. Stat'i po filosofii*, 2-oe iz., M., 1905; B.3617, *Empiriomonizm. Stat'i po filosofii*, 3-oe iz., M., 1908; B.3618, *Empiriomonizm. Kniga III*, M,. 1906.

192. *BDP*, B.3678, E. Mach, *Analiz oščuščenij i otnošenie fizičeskogo k psikhičeskomu*, M., 1907, p.294.

193. *BDP*, B.3703, R. Richter, *Skepticizm v filosofii*, t.I, SPb, 1910, p.289.

194. *BDP*, B.3724, E. Boutroux, *Nauka i religija v sovremennoj filosofii*, SPb, 1910, p.207 [*Science et religion dans la philosophie contemporaine*, Paris, Flammarion, 1908, p.241].

195. W. Windelband, *Platon*, 6. Aufl., Stuttgart, Fr. Fromman, 1920, p.77 note.

196. See J. Dietzgen's works in Plekhanov's library: *BDP*, A.2079, *Sozialdemokratische Philosophie*, Berlin 1906; A.254, *Streifzüge eines Sozialisten in das Gebiet der Erkenntnistheorie*, Berlin 1905; B.3653, *Eksursii socialista v oblasti teorii poznanija*, SPb, 1907; [1974b, pp.76-77] B.3652, *Sušč̌nost' golovnoj raboty čeloveka*, M., s.d.; [*ibid.* pp.75-76] B.3654, *Zavoevanija (Akvizit) filosofii i Pis'ma o logike*, SPb, 1906. [*ibid.* pp.78-80]

197. See J. Dietzgen, *Briefe über Logik, in Schriften in drei Bänden*, Berlin, Akademie Verlag, 1962, Bd.II, pp.229-230. On Lenin's opinion, see: *Materializm i empiriokriticizm*, in *PSS*, t.18, pp.118-122; 161-162; 256-263; *K dvadcatipjatiletiju smerti Joseph'a Dietzgen'a* [On the 25th Anniversary of J. Dietzgen's Death], in *PSS*, t.23, pp.117-120.

198. See *BDP*, B.3654, J. Dietzgen, *Zavoevanija (Akvizit) filosofii*, pp.165-166.

CHAPTER TWO

1. N. Semaško, 'Zamečanija po povodu biografii G.V. Plekhanova, sostavlennoj Ju. Arzaevym', *Proletarskaja Revoljucija*, 1922, 5, p.304.

2. K. Marx, F. Engels, *Die heilige Familie oder Kritik der*

kritischen Kritik. Gegen Bruno Bauer und Konsorten, in Marx-Engels, *Werke*, Bd. 2, pp.131-141; F. Engels, *Ludwig Feuerbach*, Bd. 21, pp.275-276.

3. *BDP*, B.3316/1, F.A. Lange, *Geschichte des Materialismus und Kritik seiner Bedeutung in der Gegenwart*, 7. Aufl., Leipzig 1902, p.230.

4. *ADP*, Fond N° 1093, Ed.khr. T.18, p.6.

5. B. Spinoza, *Opera quae supersunt omnia*, Iena 1802-1803 (*BDP*, B.3520/1-2). The only marked pages are in the second volume, on the *Ethics*. In the *Dom Plekhanova* Library there are two other copies of this work: Spinoza, *Die Ethik*, tr. J. Stern, Leipzig s.d. (B.3522); Spinoza, *Etika izložennaja geometričeskim metodom*, tr. V.I. Modestov, 4-oe iz., SPb 1904 (B.3713).

6. *Spinozas Briefwechsel*, tr. J. Stern, Leipzig s.d. [1904] (*BDP*, B.3523). Plekhanov was interested, for instance, in the IX letter to de Vries, where Spinoza explained his definition of attribute.

7. B. Spinoza, *Ethica*, Pars II, Prop.10, Sch. (*BDP*, B.3522, p.90). Although Plekhanov insisted especially on Spinoza's role within materialistic thought, he did not ignore the importance of Spinoza to Hegel. [1974a, p.41]

8.B. Spinoza, *Ethica*, Pars II, Prop.7, Sch. Next to this underlined passage, Plekhanov jotted down: "Materialism. Cfr. Feuerbach" (*BDP*, B.3522, p.85).

9. *Ibid.* Pars II, Prop.7 (*BDP*, B.3522, p.84). See also Pars V, Prop.1, Dem. (*BDP*, B.3713, p. 293).

10. Here Plekhanov paraphrased Feuerbach [*Grundsätze der Philosophie der Zukunft*, 45].

11. A. Lunacharsky, *Ot Spinoz'y do Marx'a*, M., 1925, p.68.

12. N. Valentinov, *Filosofskie postroenija marksizma*, p.89.

13. For a comprehensive picture of the polemic on Spinoza's interpretation: G.L. Kline (ed.), *Spinoza in Soviet Philosophy*, London, Routledge & Kegan, 1952. See also below, Appendix.

14. L. Feuerbach, *Wider den Dualismus von Leib und Seele, Fleisch und Geist*, in *Sämtliche Werke*, 2. Aufl., Stuttgart, Fr. Fromman, 1903-1911, Bd.II, pp.328-329. [1908a, p.134]

15. B. Spinoza, *Ethica*, Pars II, Prop.13, Sch. (*BDP*, B.3522, p.93).

16. J. Stern, 'Der ökonomische und der naturphilosophische Materialismus', p.304.

17. P.N. Lepešinskij, *Na pavarote*, 1925, p.155, in I. Kryvelev, 'K voprosu o gilozoizme', *Antireligioznik*, 1932, 21-22, p.38.

18. Plekhanov surely knew *De la causa, principio et uno* through Jacobi's exposition (*Werke*, IV Band, II Abth.), (*ADP*, Fond N° 1093, Ed.khr. T.79, pp.3-11); in Italian he read *Gli eroici furori* (Milano 1865), (*ADP*, Fond N° 1093, Ed.khr. T.119, p.40).

19. B. Spinoza, *Ethica*, Pars II, Def.3, Expl. (*BDP*, B.3522, p.78). On Spinoza's idea of imagination, see G.H.R. Parkinson, *Spinoza's Theory of Knowledge*, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1952, pp.138-162.

20. B. Spinoza, *Ethica*, Pars II, Prop. 44 and Dem. (*BDP*, B.3713, p.102; B.3520/2, p.117). See also below, Conclusion.

21. *Ibid.* Pars II, Prop.19 (Plekhanov wrote: "for the theory of knowledge" - *BDP*, B.3522, p.108); Pars II, Prop.23 ("N.B." - *BDP*, B.3522, p.111; "for the theory of knowledge" - *BDP*, B.3713, p.84); Pars II, Prop.26 ("for the theory of knowledge" - *BDP*, B.3522, p.113; "extremely important" - *BDP*, B.3520/2, p.103).

22. *Ibid.* Pars II, Prop.13, Lemma 3, Ax.1 (*BDP*, B.3522, p.97). See also Pars II, Prop.17, Sch..

23. J. Stern, 'Der ökonomische und naturphilosophische Materalismus', p.303.

24. J. Stern, *Die Philosophie Spinozas*, 2. verb. Aufl., Stuttgart, Dietz, 1894, p.5 (*BDP*, B.3533).

25. Though polemicizing with him, Plekhanov held Stern in a certain esteem. [1898b, p.351]

26. B. Spinoza, *Ethica*, Pars II, Prop.16 and Cor. (*BDP*, B.3522, p.102-103). See also Pars II, Prop.18, Sch. (*BDP*, B.3522, p.107).

27. A.A. Bogdanov, *Empiriomonizm. Kniga III*, pp.X-XI, XX, XXXV, XLI.

28. F.A. Lange, *Geschichte des Materialismus*, p.378. Beside this passage, Plekhanov wrote: "Really?!" and drew attention to a passage where Lange himself emphasized the active role that according to materialism the sense organs play in our knowledge of external objects (*BDP*, B.3316/1, p.366).

29. The German term is closest to the Russian *teoretiko-poznovatel'noj* Plekhanov used here, which actually mirrors the structure and meaning of the former.

30. P.H.D. d'Holbach (M. Mirabaud), *Système de la nature*, London 1770, v.I, pp.95-96 note. [1896, p.40]

31. J. Priestley, *A Free Discussion of the Doctrines of Materialism and Philosophical Necessity, in a Correspondence between Dr.Price and Dr.Priestley*, London 1778, p.50 (*ADP*, Fond N° 1093, Ed.khr. T.43, p.20).

32. J. Priestley, *Disquisitions Relating to Matter and Spirit*, 2nd ed., Birmingham 1782, pp.151-152 (*ADP*, Fond N° 1093, Ed.khr. T.67, pp. 2-3).

33. *Ibid.* p.151 (*ADP*, Fond N° 1093, Ed.khr. T.67, p.2).

34. So thought, for instance, Priestley [*op.cit.*, p.121]. [1909e, p.249]

35. See, for instance: S. Batiščev, 'Recenzija: G.V. Plekhanov, «Protiv filosofskogo revizionizma»', p.168; B.A. Čagin, I.N. Kurbatova, *Plekhanov*, p.188. See also below, Appendix.

36. J. Priestley, *op.cit.*, pp.139-140 (*ADP*, Fond N° 1093, Ed.khr. T.34, p.27).

37. J. Priestley, *A Free Discussion...*, p.46 (*ADP*, Fond N° 1093, Ed.khr. T.43, p.20).

38. See Lenin, *Filosofskie tetradi*, M. 1947, p.154.

39. V. Sarab"janov, 'Plekhanov - filosof', *Sputnik kommunista*, 1923, 24, pp.153-150.

40. I. Kant, *Kritik der reinen Vernunft*, hrsg. von K. Kehrbach, 2. Aufl., Leipzig (1877) (*BDP*, B.3308); *Logik. Ein Handbuch zu Vorlesungen*, Königsberg 1800 (*BDP*, B.3283); *Prolegomena zu einer jeden künftigen Metaphysik...*, hrsg. von J.H. v.Kirchmann, 2. Aufl., Heidelberg 1882 (*BDP*, B.3288); *Kritika praktičeskogo razuma*, tr. N.M. Sokolov, SPb 1897 (*BDP*, B.3659); *Kritika sposobnosti suždenija*, tr. N.M. Sokolov, SPb, 1898 (*BDP*, B.3660).

41. Beside a passage, where Lange wrote about the theory of double truth, Plekhanov jotted down: "cfr. Kantianism" [F.A. Lange, *op.cit.*, p.181 (*BDP*, B.3316/1)].

42. Towards the end of his life Plekhanov changed his mind about Kantian ethics. See S.H. Baron, *op.cit.*, pp.329-331.

43. *ADP*, Fond N° 1093, Ed.khr. T.68, p.2.

44. I. Kant, *Erklärung in Beziehung auf Fichtes Wissenshaftslehre*, in *Gesammelte Schriften*, Bd.XII, pp.370-371. Plekhanov's notes on Kant's *Erklärung* are in *ADP*, Fond N°1093, Ed.khr. T.68, p.25; Ed.khr. T.213, p.27. The first notebook dates back to 1898-99, the second to the 1890's.

45. I. Kant, *Prolegomena*, 13, Anm. II, in *Gesammelte Schriften*, Bd.IV, p.289. Plekhanov marked this passage in the margin (*BDP*, B.3288, p.45).

46. In this interpretation of Kantianism, Plekhanov found an ally in Feuerbach. The latter wrote: "Kantian philosophy leads with inexorable necessity to Fichtian idealism or - it seems so strange at a first sight, but Kantian philosophy is a contradiction - to sensualism"

[L. Feuerbach, *Ausgewählte Briefe*, hrsg. von W. Bolin, Leipzig, Otto Wigand, 1904, Bd.II, N.246 an W. Bolin, p.226 - *BDP*, B.3167/2].

47. I. Kant, *op.cit.*, 13, An. II, p.289. [1898c, pp.409-410]

48. *BDP*, B.3035, P. Beck, *Die Nachahmung und ihre Bedeutung für Psychologie und Völkerkunde*, Leipzig, Hermann Haacke, 1904, p.33. [1898c, pp.414-415, note added to the 1906 edition]

49. According to Plekhanov, Windelband himself had acknowledged that [*BDP*, B. 3309, W. Windelband, 'Nach hundert Jahren', in *Zu Kants Gedächtnis*, Berlin 1904, pp.5-20].

50. To Kurd Lasswitz's rhetorical question: "Who has ever stated that things-in-themselves are the source of sensory perceptions?" [*Die Lehre Kants von der Idealität des Raumes und der Zeit im Zusammenhange mit seiner Kritik des Erkennens*, Berlin, Weidmann, 1883, p.132], Plekhanov answered: "Kant himself" and referred to *Prolegomena*, 13, Anm. II and the *Widerlegung des Idealismus* (*ADP*, Fond N° 1093, Ed.khr. T.42, p.23).

51. See L. Colletti, 'Bernstein e il marxismo della Seconda Internazionale', in E. Bernstein, *I presupposti del socialismo e i compiti della socialdemocrazia*, tr. E. Grillo, Bari, Laterza, 1974, p.XXXV.

52. Thus Plekhanov jotted down beside Schelling's statement: "nature is *subject-object*", quoted by Kuno Fischer: "Exactly: I would have said: object-subject" [*BDP*, B.3734/7, K. Fischer, *Istorija novoj filosofii*, t.VII: *Schelling, ego žizn', sočinenija i učenie*, tr. N.O. Losskij, SPb 1905, p.480].

53. *ADP*, Fond N° 1093, Ed.khr. T.107, p.5.

54. A.I. Herzen, *Byloe i dumy*, in *Sobranie sočinenij v tridcati tomakh*, M., 1954-..., t.IX, p.23.

55. L. Feuerbach, *Kritik der Hegel'schen Philosophie*, in *Sämtliche Werke*, Bd.II, p.165. Next to this passage, Plekhanov jotted down: "Very important" (*BDP*, B.3164/2). In the *Dom Plekhanova* Library one can find Plekhanov's notes on the first edition of Feuerbach's *Sämtliche Werke* (Leipzig 1846-1866), that date back to the 1890's (*ADP*, Fond N° 1093, Ed.khr. T.39, pp.3-17; T.42, pp.39-46; T.66, pp.25-27, 37-34). Plekhanov's marginalia on the volumes of the second edition (Stuttgart 1903-1911, *BDP*, B.3164) testify to his unchanged interest. It is significant, by the way, that Plekhanov both times referred to the same problems and, often, to the same passages.

56. L. Feuerbach, *Vorläufige Thesen zur Reform der*

Philosophie, in *Sämtliche Werke*, Bd.II, p.239 (*ADP*, Fond N° 1093, Ed.khr. T.39, p. 3; *BDP*, B.3164/2).

57. F.A. Lange, *Geschichte des Materialismus*, 3. Aufl., Iserlohn, J. Baedeker, 1876, zw. Buch, p.74. See also Plekhanov 1913, p.404.

58. L. Feuerbach, *Grundsätze...*, 51 (*ADP*, Fond N° 1093, Ed.khr. T.39, p.9; *BDP*, B.3164/2, p.313).

59. *Ibid.* 32 (*ADP*, Fond N° 1093, Ed.khr. T.39, p.5).

60. Chernyshevsky wrote to his sons: "When he [Feuerbach] appeared, Spinoza was outdated. But more than a century and a half had passed before Spinoza's worthy successor appeared" [N.G. Chernyshevsky, 'Pis'mo N. 606 A.N. i M.N. Chernyshevskim', in *Polnoe sobranie sočinenij*, M. 1939-1950, t.XV, p.23]. See also Plekhanov 1913, p.404.

61. L. Feuerbach, *Grundsätze...*, 41.

62. *Ibid.* 39, 36.

63. *Ibid.* 32.

64. *Ibid.* 51. (*BDP*, B.3164/2, p.314) The same passage has been copied in *ADP*, Fond N° 1093, Ed.khr. T.39, p.9.

65. L. Feuerbach, *op.cit.*, 32.

66. L. Feuerbach, *Sämtliche Werke*, Bd.X, p.303. There is no evidence that Plekhanov knew specifically this aphorism. It is, however, sure he knew Feuerbach's posthumous aphorisms very well, both in K. Grün's (*BDP*, B.3166/2, Bd.II, pp.305-333) and in W. Bolin's collections, the latter located in the tenth volume of Feuerbach's *Sämtliche Werke* that Bolin edited (*BDP*, B.3164/10, pp.297-346).

67. *L. Feuerbach in seinem Briefwechsel und Nachlass*, dargest. von K. Grün, Leipzig und Heidelberg, C.F. Winter, 1874, Bd. II, p.308 (*BDP*, 3166/2). Plekhanov certainly knew this aphorism. [1897e, p.442; 1909e, pp.233-234]

68. L. Feuerbach, *"Kritik der Idealismus" von F. Dorguth*, in *Sämtliche Werke*, Bd. II, p.133.

69. L. Feuerbach, *Wider den Dualismus von Leib und Seele, Fleisch und Geist*, in *Sämtliche Werke*, Bd.II, p.340.

70. *Loc.cit.*

71. *ADP*, Fond N° 1093, Ed.khr. T.66, pp.25, 26.

72. L. Feuerbach, *Grundsätze...*, 54.

73. L. Feuerbach, *Über Spiritualismus und Materialismus, in Sämtliche Werke*, Bd.X, p.228. Plekhanov jotted down: "Feuerbach's materialism: extremely important" (*BDP*, B.3164/10).

74. L. Feuerbach, *Vorläufige Thesen...*, in *Sämtliche Werke*, Bd.II, p.239; *Grundsätze...*, 53 (*ADP*, Fond N° 1093, Ed.khr. T.39,

p.10).

75. J. Stern, 'Der ökonomische und der naturphilosophische Materialismus', p.303. [1898b, p.358]

76. Later Plekhanov's translation of Marx' *Theses* met with Lenin's dislike. See V.I. Lenin, *Materializm i empiriokriticizm*, in *PSS*, t.18, p.104.

77. L. Feuerbach, *Über Spiritualismus und Materialismus, in Sämtliche Werke*, Bd.X, pp.216-217 (*BDP*, B.3164/10, pp.216-217). Plekhanov referred to Marx and to his theory of knowledge in another, analogous, preceding passage (*BDP*, B.3164/10, p.110).

78. A. Schmidt, *Emanzipatorische Sinnlichkeit. Ludwig Feuerbachs anthropologischer Materialismus*, München, Carl Hanser, 1973, p.234.

79. In this letter to Lavrov, Plekhanov put Lavrov himself as the third of "his preferred authors". Baron, however, thinks that Plekhanov numbered Lavrov among his 'masters' mainly "as an expression of gratitude for the many kindnesses Lavrov rendered him in the early 1880's" [S.H. Baron, *op.cit.*, p.7 note].

80. N.G. Chernyshevsky, *Predislovie k tret'emu izdaniju "Estetičeskykh otnošenij isskustva k dejstvitel'nosti"* [Preface to the Third Edition of «The Esthetic Relation of Art to Reality»], in *PSS*, t.II, p.121. Plekhanov could not read this important preface until 1906, though it had been written in 1887, since it was not until then that the censor allowed its publication in the tenth volume of Chernyshevsky's *Sočinenija* (*BDP*, D.6346/10b, pp.190-197).

81. *Ibid.* p.121.

82. N.G. Chernyshevsky, 'Pis'mo N.606 A.N. i M.N. Chernyshevskim', in *PSS*, t.XV, p.23.

83. N.G. Chernyshevsky, *Antropologičeskij princip v filosofii* [The Anthropological Principle in Philosophy], in *PSS*, t.VII, p.293.

84. *Ibid.* p.242.

85. *Ibid.* p.268.

86. N.G. Chernyshevsky, *Kharakter čelovečeskogo znanija* [The Character of Human Knowledge], in *PSS*, t.X, pp.720-722. Because of his polemic against the subjectivists, Chernyshevsky earned Lenin's admiration [V.I. Lenin, *Materializm i empirioktiticizm*, in *PSS*, t.18, pp.381-384]. More generally, on Lenin's appreciation of Chernyshevsky's thought, see N. Valentinov, *The Early Years of Lenin*, pp.216-226.

87. N.G. Chernyshevsky, *op.cit.*, p.731.

88. Actually Chernyshevsky also put Aristotle among his own

'forerunners', [*Antropologičeskij princip...*, p.294] but, according to Plekhanov, that was just a mistake. [1909e, pp.236-237]

89. N.G. Chernyshevsky, *Očerki gogolevskogo perioda russkoj literatury* [Essays on the Gogol Period in Russian Literature], in *PSS*, t.III, p.208.

90. *Loc.cit.*

91. N.G. Chernyshevsky, *Predislovie k tret'emu izdaniju...*, p.125. Feuerbach himself, however, had deemed Johannes Müller to be a "modern physiological idealist" [L. Feuerbach, *Über Spiritualismus und Materialismus*, in *Sämtliche Werke*, Bd.X, p.223].

92. See M.G. Jaroševskij, *Istorija psikhologii*, 2-oe per. iz., M. 1976, p.187.

CHAPTER THREE

1. P.B. Aksel'rod, *Perežitoe i peredumannoe*, kn.I, Berlin 1923, p.157.

2. *ADP*, Fond N° 1093, Ed.khr. T.29. In *Dom Plekhanova* catalogue this notebook appears to date back to 1886. Plekhanov's wife, Rosalija Markovna, however, recalled that Plekhanov attended Vogt's lessons in 1882. [*LNP*, I, p.201]

3. For instance: P.S. Škurinov, *Pozitivizm v Rossii XIX veka*, p.71; A. Vucinich, *Science in Russian Culture*, v.II: *1861-1917*, Stanford, Stanford U.P., 1970, pp.122-123.

4. F.M. Dostoevsky, *Besy* [Demons], in *Polnoe sobranie sočinenij*, 6-oe iz., SPb, 1904-1906, t.VIII, p.308.

5. A. Vucinich, *op.cit.*, p.122.

6. Kh.S. Koštojanc, *I.M. Sečenov*, M.-L,. 1945, p.10.

7. K.A. Timirjazev, *Sočinenija*, M., 1938, t.V, pp.107-108.

8. J.A. Rogers, 'The Russian Populists' Response to Darwin', *Slavic Review*, 1963 (XXII), p.457.

9. *Bogoslovskij Vestnik*, II (1911), p.434, quoted in G.L. Kline, 'Darwinism and the Russian Orthodox Church', in E.J. Simmons (ed.), *Continuity and Change in Russian and Soviet Thought*, New York, Russell & Russell, 1967, p.308.

10. A. Vucinich, *op.cit.*, p.122.

11. N.O. Lossky, *Histoire de la philosophie russe des origines à 1950*, Paris, Payot, 1954, p.174.

12. See *Russkij Biografičeskij Slovar'*, ed. A.A. Polovcov,

SPb, 1896-1918 - repr. New York, Kraus, 1962, t.II, pp.714-715; Kh.S. Koštojanc, *Očerki po istorii fiziologii v Rossii*, M.-L. 1946, pp.156-157.

13. A. Vucinich, *op.cit.*, p.102; Kh.S. Koštojanc, *op.cit.*, pp.156-157.

14. A. Vucinich, *op.cit.*, p.15.

15. Kh.S. Koštojanc, *op.cit.*, p.219.

16. *Ibid.* p.159; D.I. Pisarev, 'Fiziologičeskie eskizy Moleschott'a' and 'Process žizni. Fiziologičeskie pis'ma Karl'a Vogt'a', in *Sočinenija. Polnoe sobranie*, SPb 1894, t.I, pp.281-306, 307-330.

17. F.M. Dostoevsky, *Brat'ja Karamazovy* [The Brothers Karamazov], in *PSS*, t.XIV, p.274. On Dostoevsky's attitude towards science, see A. Vucinich, *op.cit.*, p. 476.

18. I.M. Sečenov, *Avtobiografičeskie zapiski*, M., 1952, p.81; Kh.S. Koštojanc, *I.M.Sečenov*, p.36. About Sečenov's biography see schematic, but exhaustive information in M.G. Jaroševskij, *Ivan Mikhajlovic Sečenov*, L. 1968, pp.405-411.

19. I.M. Sečenov, *op.cit.*, p.161.

20. M.G. Jaroševskij, *Sečenov i mirovaja psikhologičeskaja mysl'*, M., 1981, p.60.

21. I.M. Sečenov, 'Elementy mysli' [The Elements of Thought], in *Izbrannye filosofskie i psikhologičeskie proizvedenija*, pp.420-423.

22. A.L. Švarcman, 'Chernyshevsky i estestvoznanie', VF, 1956, 4, p.149; V.I. Borisov, 'Nekotorye voprosy marksistsko-leninskoj teorii otraženija i učenie I.P. Pavlova o vyssej nervnoj dejatel'nosti', *Učenie zapiski Kalininskogo gos. in-ta, Kaf. marksizma-leninizma*, 1957, XXIII, p.198; N.F. Utkina, *op.cit.*, pp.192-193; M.G. Jaroševskij, *op.cit.*, p.111.

23. Ch.S. Koštojanc, *op.cit.*, pp.222-223; O.A. Pini, *Chernyshevsky v Peterburge*, L., 1978, pp.155-156.

24. See *Bolšaja Sovetskaja Enciklopedija*, s.v. *Sečenova-Bokova*, iz. 2-oe, M. 1949-1958, t.38, p.626.

25. Kh.S. Koštojanc, *I.M. Sečenov*, pp.15, 47; A. Vuchinic, *op.cit.*, p. 126.

26. V. Kaganov, 'I.M. Sečenov', in I.M. Sečenov, *Izbrannye...*, pp.15-28.

27. L.F. Panteleev, *Vospominanija*, M. 1958, in P.T. Belov, *Filosofija vydajuščichsija russkikh estestvoispitatelej vtoroj poloviny XIX* - načala *XX vv.*, M., 1970, p.131. Pantaleev however underestimated Sečenov's popularity before the publication of his

'Reflexes': the "intimate circle of scholars" to which Pantaleev referred was really the élite of European physiology. One of Sečenov's specialistic writings, for instance, was published in 1863 in the *Works* of the Paris Academy of Sciences, with Claude Bernard's presentation ('Note sur le modérateurs des mouvements réflexes dans le cerveau de la grenouille') [Kh.S. Koštojanc, *Očerki...*, p.193].

28. I.M. Sečenov, *Refleksy golovnogo mozga*, M., 1952.

29. I.M. Sečenov, 'Komu i kak razrabotyvat' psikhologiju?' [Who and How Should Develop Psychology?], in *Izbrannye...*, p.285.

30. *Ibid.* pp.222, 257. See also Sečenov's polemic with K.D. Kavelin, professor at Saint Petersburg University, between 1871 and 1874: K.D. Kavelin, 'Zadači psikhologii. Soobraženija o metodakh i programme psikhologičeskich issledovanij' [The Tasks of Psychology. Considerations on the Method and Program of Psychological Research]; 'Pis'ma v redakciju "Vestnika Evropy" po povodu "Zamečanij" i voprosov professora Sečenova' [Letter to the Editorial Staff of "Vestnik Evropy" on Prof. Sečenov's "Notes" and Questions]; 'Neskol'ko slov v otvet na "Neskol'ko slov" professora Sečenova' [A Few Words in Reply to Prof. Sečenov's "A Few Words"] in *Sobranie sočinenij*, t.III, SPb 1899, pp.375-648, 649-786, 785-792; I.M. Sečenov, 'Zamečanija na knigu g. Kavelina "Zadači psikhologii"' [Notes on Mr. Kavelin's book "The Tasks of Psychology"]; 'Neskol'ko slov v otvet na "pis'ma" g. Kavelina' [A Few Words in Reply to Mr. Kavelin's "Letters"], in *Izbrannye...*, pp.179-218, 219-221.

31. See below, Appendix.

32. See M.G. Jaroševskij, *Ivan Mikhajlovič Sečenov*, p.187.

33. I.M. Sečenov, *Avtobiografičeskie zapiski*, pp.150-151.

34. I.M. Sečenov, *op.cit.*, p.152.

35. *Ibid.* p.153.

36. See, for instance, H. v.Helmholtz, 'Über die Erhaltung der Kraft', in *Philosophische Vorträge und Aufsätze*, Berlin, Akademie Verlag, 1971, pp.109-117.

37. H. v.Helmholtz, 'Über das Ziel und die Fortschritte der Naturwissenschaft', in *Philosophische Vorträge...*, p.179.

38. H. v.Helmholtz, 'Die Tatsachen in der Wahrnehmung', in *Philosophische Vorträge...*, p.251.

39. H. v.Helmholtz, 'Über Goethes naturwissenschaftliche Arbeiten', in *Philosophische Vorträge...*, pp.38-39.

40. *Ibid.* p.39.

41. H. v.Helmholtz, 'Die Tatsachen...', p.256.

42. *Ibid.* p.255.

43. I.M.Sečenov, 'Vpečatlenija i dejstvitel'nost" [Impressions and Reality], in *Izbrannye...*, pp.328-330.

44. *Ibid.* pp.333-334.

45. I.M. Sečenov, 'Predmetnaja mysl' i dejstvitel'nost'', in *Izbrannye...*, p.352.

46. *Ibid.* pp.352-353.

47. In 1956 M.G. Jaroševskij highlighted this problem ['G.V.Plekhanov i I.M.Sečenov', *VF*, 1956, 6, p.215].

48. I.M. Sečenov, 'Hermann von Helmholtz kak fiziolog' [H. v.Helmholtz as a Physiologist], in *Izbrannye...*, p.369.

49. V. Dobrovol'skij, 'Vidim li my predmeti takimi, kakimi oni suščestvujut v prirode?', *Znanie*, 1873, 1, pp.112, 117.

50. See N.K. Mikhajlovskij, 'Zapiski profana III: O žažde poznanija' in *Polnoe sobranie sočinenij*, SPb 1909, t.III, pp.330-354. Plekhanov is likely to have known Mikhajlovskij's theory of sensation, but he never discussed it: in the *Dom Plekhanova* Library there are two copies of the third volumes of his *Sočinenija* (D.6292/2a-2b), but the above-quoted article is neither underlined, nor annotated. On Mikhajlovskij's epistemology, see N.F. Utkina, *op.cit.*, pp.100-106; T.G. Masaryk, *The Spirit of Russia*, London-New York, Allen & Unwin - The Macmillan Company, 2nd ed., 1955, v.II, pp.137-138.

51. N.Ja. Grot, 'O vremeni', *VFP*, 1894, 24(4), p.387; 23(3), p.248, in M.G. Jaroševskij, *Ivan Mikhajlovič Sečenov*, p.346.

52. E. Čelpanov, 'Helmholtz kak filosof i psicholog', *VFP*, 1891, 10, pp.41-51.

53. I.M. Sečenov, 'Hermann von Helmholtz kak fiziolog', in *Izbrannye...*, pp.370-372.

54. I.M. Sečenov, 'O predmetnom myšlenii s fiziologičeskoj točki zrenija' [On the Objective Thought from a Physiological Standpoint], in *Izbrannye...*, p.380.

55. G.I. Čelpanov, for instance, wrote his dissertation on that topic: "Problema vosprijatija prostranstva v svjazi s učeniem ob apriornosti i vroždennosti" [The Problem of the Perception of Space related with the Theory of *A Priori* and Innateness] (1896-1904).

56. Sečenov studied for a while, in 1862, at Bernard's laboratory in Paris, though without great success (I.M. Sečenov, *Avtobiografičeskie zapiski*, pp.177-179).

57. H. v.Helmholtz, 'Über die Wechselwirkung der Naturskräfte und die darauf bezüglichen neuesten Ermittelungen der Physik', in *Populäre wissenschaftliche Vorträge*, II Heft, Braunschweig, F. Vieweg, 1871, p.102.

58. M.G. Jaroševskij, *Ivan Mikhajlovič Sečenov*, pp. 309-310.

59. I.M. Sečenov, 'Elementy mysli', in *Izbrannye...*, p.420.

We refer here to the text of the second edition (1903), reviewed by the author. Comparing it with the first edition [*ibid.* notes], it turns out that Sečenov did not change much in the part we are considering.

60. I.M. Sečenov, *op.cit.*, p.407.

61. *Loc.cit.*

62. *Ibid.* p.419.

63. *Ibid.* p.408; 406.

64. *Ibid.* p.414.

65. M.G. Jaroševskij, *Problema determinizma v psikhofiziologii XIX veka*, Dušanbe 1961, p.361.

66. See I.M. Sečenov, *op.cit.*, pp.420-423.

67. Th.H. Huxley, *Hume*, in *Collected Essays*, v.VI, London - New York, McMillan, 1901, p.94. Plekhanov quoted this passage in French translation in one of his notebooks, next to other passages on physiological psychology and psycho-physical parallelism (*ADP*, Fond N° 1093, Ed.khr. T.42, pp.42-43). Plekhanov often quoted this passage in his published works as well, e.g.: 1895b, p.760; 1896, p.142; 1897b, pp.557-558.

68. Plekhanov once referred to Sečenov in his notes. [1938i, p.222] Sečenov's name appears also in notebook N° T.124a, where Plekhanov noted several titles of M.A. Antonovič's writings. Among them there is an article that dates back to 1881: 'Prof. Sečenov o nesvobode voli' [Prof. Sečenov on Non-Freedom of Will] (*ADP*, Fond N° 1093, Ed.khr. T.124a, pp.32-33).

69. M.G. Jaroševskij, *Problema determinizma...*, p.390. Sečenov's 'materialism' was often criticized by his contemporaries: see, e.g., E.L. Radlov, 'Naturalističeskaja teorija poznanija (Po povodu statej prof. I.M.Sečenova), *VFP*, 1894, 25(5), pp.682-693.

70. M. Zak, 'Vopros o "pervičnikh" i "vtoričnikh" kačestvakh veščej i marksistskaja teorija otraženija', *PZM*, 1941, 3, p.121. See below, Appendix.

71. F.A. Lange, *op.cit.*, 3. Aufl., zw. Buch, pp.408-431. Plekhanov paid particular attention to p.430 (*BDP*, B.3670, p.653).

72. *BDP*, B.3446, A. Rau, *Empfinden und Denken. Eine physiologische Untersuchung über die Natur des menschlichen Verstandes*, Giessen 1896. Plekhanov paid particularly attention to pp. 1-6, 332-375.

73. *BDP*, B.3309, A. Riehl, 'Helmholtz in seinem Verhältnis zu Kant', in *Zu Kants Gedächtnis*, pp.261-285.

74. See *Katalog biblioteki G.V. Plekhanova*, Gos. Pub. Bibl. im. Saltykova-Ščedrina, *Dom Plekhanova*, L., 1965, vyp.3, pp.163-173.

75. A.V. Lunacharsky, *Vospominanija i vpečatlenija*, p.20.

76. In the *Dom Plekhanova* Library there are a few works by August Forel: *Die psychischen Fähigkeiten der Ameisen und einiger anderer Insekten*, München 1901 (*BDP*, B.3186); *L'âme et le système nerveux. Hygiène et pathologie*, Paris 1906 (*BDP*, B.3187); *Gehirn und Seele*, 9. Aufl., Stuttgart 1906 (*BDP*, B.3189); *Sexuelle Ethik. Ein Vortrag*, München 1906 (*BDP*, B.3188).

77. *BDP*, B.3189, A. Forel, *Gehirn und Seele*, p.16.

78. See *ibid.* p.23.

79. In particular, Plekhanov was referring to P. Beck, *Die Nachahmung und ihre Bedeutung für Psychologie und Völkerkünde*, Leipzig 1904 (*BDP*, B.3035) and to W. Windelband, 'Nach hundert Jahren', in *Zu Kants Gedächtnis*, pp.5-20 (*BDP*, B.3309).

80. H. Spencer, *The Principles of Psychology*, Pars II, 85, 2nd ed., London, Williams and Norgate, 1870-1872, v.I, p.206. See Plekhanov 1899a, p.435 note. Plekhanov copied the same passage, in French translation, into one of his notebooks (*ADP*, Fond N° 1093, Ed.khr. T.42, p.46).

81. Plekhanov certainly knew Spencer's comparison through Fouillée's exposition, too. He had actually copied the corresponding passage of Fouillée's *Psychologie anglaise contemporaine* [Paris 1875, pp.241-242] in one of his notebooks (*ADP*, Fond N° 1093, Ed.khr., T.42, pp.46-47).

82. H. Spencer, *op.cit.*, Part IV, 473, v.II, p.497.

83. *BDP*, L.12062, J. Reinke, 'Kants Erkenntnislehre und die moderne Biologie', *Deutsche Rundschau*, 1904, 9, pp.459-460. Plekhanov attentively jotted down Reinke's article and quoted it in 1905b, p.482.

84. *ADP*, Fond N° 1093, Ed.khr. T.42, p.47.

85. *BDP*, B.3654, J. Dietzgen, *Zavoevanija (Akvizit) filosofii i Pis'ma o logike*, p.166.

86. Ch. Darwin, *The Origin of Species*, New York, J. Fitzgerald, 1884, p.165 (in French translation: *BDP*, B.3135, p.396).

CONCLUSION

1. See Ja. Berman, 'Marksizm ili makhizm', p.83.
2. To be more precise, it implies that for Hegel the problem did not refer really to the "method" of knowledge, but rather to the way of proceeding of knowledge as the Thing itself.
3. F. Engels, *Anti-Dühring*, in Marx-Engels, *Werke*, Bd.20, pp.61-77.
4. See Plekhanov's marginalia in L. Woltmann, *Teorija Darwin'a i socializm. Opyt estestvennoj istorii obščestva*, tr. M.A. Engel'gardt, SPb 1900 (*BDP*, A.1267), particularly pp. 5, 25, 28.
5. See, for instance, G. Prestipino, 'Introduzione', in G.V. Plechanov, *La funzione della personalità nella storia*, Roma, Editori Riuniti, 1973, p.16.
6. See A. Arato, 'L'antinomia del marxismo classico: marxismo e filosofia', in *Storia del marxismo*, v.II, Torino, Einaudi, 1979, p.704.
7. G.W.F. Hegel, *Encyclopädie*, 81 Z. (*BDP*, B.3257).
8. G.W.F. Hegel, *Wissenschaft der Logik*, in *Sämtliche Werke*, Bd.V, p.343. Plekhanov did not pay any attention to this passage and, more generally, to Hegel's concept of mediation, while reading the latter's *Logic* (*BDP*, B.3258) - which generally interested Plekhanov much less than the first section of Hegel's *Encyclopädie* did (*BDP*, B.3257).
9. K. Marx, *Thesen über Feuerbach*, in Marx-Engels, *Werke*, Bd.3, p.5.
10. K. Marx, *Das Kapital*, in Marx-Engels, *Werke*, Bd.23, p. 192.
11. A. Schmidt, *Der Begriff der Natur in der Lehre von Marx*, Frankfurt am Main, Europäische Verlagsanstalt, 1962, p.65.
12. *Ibid.* pp.91-92.
13. See K. Marx, *Thesen über Feuerbach*, in Marx-Engels, *Werke*, Bd.3, pp.5-7; F. Engels, *Ludwig Feuerbach*, Bd.21, p.276.
14. A. Schmidt, *op.cit.*, p.101.
15. *Loc.cit.*
16. V. Strada, 'Materialismo e dialettica nel marxismo di Plekhanov', p.80.

APPENDIX

PLEKHANOV'S THEORY OF KNOWLEDGE IN SOVIET STUDIES

Plekhanov's fortunes in Soviet Union have always depended on alternating waves of reverence, blame, and rehabilitation, all of which conformed with the current ideological tendencies and political situations. Although Soviet views of Plekhanov's epistemology have been strictly linked with their general assessment of Plekhanov's Marxism, his sociological determinism, his political Menshevism, his nationalist "mistakes", and so on, our focus here is limited Soviet interpretations of Plekhanov's epistemology, from the 1920's up to now (1988).

I. At the beginning of the 1920's Plekhanov was generally admired and praised. In spite of Lenin's deep and long-standing political disagreements with Plekhanov, in 1921 he urged the youth to study the master's philosophical works. He remarked "for the young party members, one *cannot* become a conscious, *real* communist without studying - I repeat, *studying* - everything Plekhanov wrote on philosophy, since it is the best in the whole International Marxist literature." Lenin therefore wished that "the forthcoming edition of Plekhanov's works bring together all of the articles on philosophy into one or more special volumes, with a detailed index etc. Because this has to be reckoned with the compulsory textbooks of communism." Moreover, "the workers' State ... has to require that philosophy professors know Plekhanov's account of Marxist philosophy and that they be able to communicate this knowledge to their students." [V.I. Lenin, *Ešče raz o profsojuzakh, o tekuščem momente i ob ošibkakh tt. Trotskogo i Bukharina*, in *PSS*, t.42, p.290]

In 1922 the XIth Congress of the CP(b) entrusted the Central Committee "to make arrangements in order that in the near future the Marxist Classics, in the first place Plekhanov's Marxist works, be published". [*KPSS v rezoljucijakh i rešenijakh s"ezdov, konferencij i plenumov CK*, iz. 9-oe, M. 1983, t.2, p.525] Between 1923 and 1927 there appeared 24 volumes of Plekhanov's *Works*, edited by David Rjazanov. The original project also called for a few indices, but these were never published. [see D. Rjazanov, 'Predislovie redaktora', in G.V. Plekhanov, *Sočinenija*, t.I, pp.5-15] In 1929 the *Dom Plekhanova* was founded in Petrograd, according to Lenin's wishes.

At a meeting over which Lenin presided in October 1921, the Party

Politbjuro decided to ask Plekhanov's heirs to sell or to give Plekhanov's own archive to the Soviet State. Leo Deutsch was sent abroad to meet Plekhanov's widow and daughters, who agreed. They made only one condition, that Plekhanov's archive and library would be kept intact within the Petrograd Public Library, where they have remained ever since in a special building opened in May 1929. [see I.N. Kurbatova, 'Materialy Doma Plekhanova kak istočnik dlja izučenija istorii marksistsko-leninskoj filosofii', in *Dialektika ob"ektivnogo i sub"ektivnogo v istoričeskom processe i social'noj poznanii*, L., 1986, p.193] Between 1924 and 1928 some materials from the *Dom Plekhanova* archive were published in six volumes [*Sborniki Gruppa "Osvoboždenie Truda"*, M.-L.] edited by Leo Deutsch and with the collaboration, among the others, of Plekhanov's widow herself, of L.I. Aksel'rod, S.Ja. Vol'fson and E.M. Zinov'eva-Deutsch.

While the historical review *Proletarskaja Revoljucija* was publishing several articles and documents on Plekhanov's biography [1922, 5, 7, 8; 1924, 4, 7, 8-9], one of the first numbers of the theoretical review *Pod znamenem marksizma* was wholly devoted to the "pioneer" of Russian Marxism. Deborin, who was then editor-in-chief of the review, went so far as to welcome Plekhanov as the real founder of theoretical Marxism, as the one who "sought to lay down *a generally philosophical basis under Marxism, i.e., to turn Marxism into a Weltanschauung*", thereby implicitly denying that Marxism was already a complete world-view in Marx' and Engels' works. [A. Deborin, 'Vmesto stat'i', *PZM*, 1922, 5-6, p.12]

In the same issue there appeared a very interesting article by Trotsky. Although he admitted a few weak points in Plekhanov's works, especially in his last "social-patriotic" period, Trotsky in the end ascribed Plekhanov's "failings" to the very qualities which explained his unquestionable merits: "he was a forerunner, the first crusader of Marxism on Russian soil." Forced by the circumstances to live far away from the concrete political struggle, Plekhanov came to be unprepared for the great historical events that confronted him. But "the more Plekhanov sought to consolidate the theoretical and philosophical roots of his positions, the shorter those political roots became". According to Trotsky, all good Marxists should pay homage to Plekhanov as a theoretician. Thus, he tempered his criticism of Plekhanov's book *God na rodine* [Paris 1921], which collected his articles and speeches of 1917-1918 - i.e., his "social-patriotic" works - by contrasting them with the "real" Plekhanov:

The great, the real Plekhanov belongs to us wholly and completely.

> Our duty is to restore his spiritual figure in all its magnitude for the young generation. ... It is time, it is time to write a good book on Plekhanov. [L. Trotsky, 'Beglye mysli o G.V.Plekhanove', *PZM*, 1922, 5-6, pp.9-10]

Trotsky's suggestion was soon adopted, and during the following year V. Vaganian published a bibliographical essay, and then a longer biography of Plekhanov. [*Opyt bibliografii G.V. Plekhanova, Pg. 1923; G.V. Plekhanov*, M., 1924] In the same period S.Ja. Vol'fson published another biography that came out very soon in two editions. In his 'Preface' to the latter, Vol'fson directly referred to Trotsky's invitation, and explained:

> The process of preliminary study of Plekhanov that has just started is still far from being completed. ... Our days are days of exceptional interest in Plekhanov. One observes an enormous 'craving for Plekhanov' among proletarian students, studying youth, Marxist intelligentsia.

But Vol'fson warned: "Plekhanov does not need any canonization". [S.Ja. Vol'fson, *Plekhanov*, 2-oe iz., Minsk 1924, pp.I-III]

In fact, many different elements were cooperating in "canonizing" Plekhanov. In the early 1920's some authors revived Plekhanov's polemics against revisionism and, in particular, against Bogdanov during a new theoretical and political dispute with the latter. [see, for example: M. Baskin, 'Plekhanov v bor'be protiv "Bogdanovščinu"', *Sputnik kommunista*, 1923, 24, pp.172-178; S. G., 'Nezavidnoe sčast'e (Proročestvo Plekhanova o Bogdanove)', *ibid.* pp.179-188; S. Girinis, 'Plekhanov v bor'be protiv revizionizma', *ibid.* pp.206-217] At that moment Plekhanov's indefatigable opposition to any kind of revisionism rescued his political "sins". In 1923 N. Babakhan stated:

> As a matter of fact Plekhanov was a quite consistent orthodox-Marxist, especially as regards *chiefly theoretical* questions: theory of knowledge, dialectical materialism and philosophy in general; in these questions Plekhanov showed most talent and solidity. [N. Babakhan, 'V zaščitu leninizma', *PZM*, 1923, 4-5, p.251]

With a sort of foresight *a contrario*, Babakhan here referred to the single aspect of Plekhanov's thought that was to raise most criticisms in the following years. At that time, however, Lenin's admiration for Plekhanov was greatly contributing to the 'rescue' of Plekhanov's role as a theoretician. A few months after Lenin's death, his widow recalled:

> Vladimir Ilič loved Plekhanov with passion. Plekhanov played a great role in Vladimir Ilič's evolution, helped him to find the correct revolutionary way, and therefore for him Plekhanov was for a long time surrounded with a halo. [*Pravda*, N.83, 11.IV.1924, in B.A. Čagin, *G.V.Plekhanov i ego rol' v razvitii marksistskoj filosofii, M.-L., 1963, p.6 note]*

Deborin and his followers, in their turn, bracketed Plekhanov as a theoretician and Lenin as a 'practical person'. In Deborin's words:

> Both these thinkers are equally dear to our heart. We are not among the ones who reject Plekhanov for Lenin's sake, or Lenin for Plekhanov's. In a sense they supplement each other. Plekhanov is first and foremost a theoretician. Lenin is first and foremost a practical person, a politician, a leader. [A. Deborin, 'Lenin - voinstvujuščij materialist', *PZM*, 1924, 1, p.15 note]

Thus, Plekhanov came once again to be considered as a great Marxist 'theoretician', as he had been at the beginning of the century. It is not surprising that, during the debate between 'Mechanists' and 'Deborinites' which broke out in the middle of the 1920's, both groups tried to claim a more or less direct 'descent' from him. To this end, both groups could show some of Plekhanov's students among their advocates: Ljubov' Aksel'rod sided with the Mechanists; Deborin was the leader of the other group. Without presuming to discuss in full a debate that has been often studied also in the West [see D. Joravsky, *Soviet Marxism and Natural Science. 1917-1932*, New York, Columbia U.P., 1961; S. Tagliagambe, *Materialismo e dialettica nella filosofia sovietica*, Torino, Loescher, 1979], let us consider only a few topics closest to epistemology.

During the early 1920's the question of psycho-physical relationships was attracting considerable attention. Deborinites accounted for the appearance of consciousness at a certain level of being as a dialectical leap. By contrast, Mechanists, according to their strict monism, maintained that it was possible to explain psychic phenomena with the same laws which rule in the physical world. They deemed that consciousness arose as the result of a merely quantitative change of a certain quality which was proper to matter as such, although it was perceptible only at a certain degree of its development. In 1923 Sarab"janov, who was siding with the Mechanists, acknowledged that Plekhanov never clearly declared his views of this subject. "As an *epistemologist* coming from sociology, [Plekhanov] was interested in the relationship between *human* consciousness and

being"; he did not mind explaining the process of sensation;

> however it might be, Plekhanov and in general Marxism do not consider this question essential *for epistemology*: it is not a matter of when and where sensation appears, but of the nature of the already existing relationship between consciousness and being. [V. Sarab"janov, 'Plekhanov - filosof', *Sputnik kommunista*, 1923, 24, pp.158-159]

Two years later, however, I. Stepanov relied on Plekhanov in order to show that the Mechanists' view of psycho-physical relationships had nothing in common with vulgar materialism, unlike what their opponents had maintained. According to Stepanov, Plekhanov himself overcame Engels' critique of the French materialists' mechanism, since he stated that one could not apply Engels' opinions to contemporary sciences. In passing, Plekhanov had written in one of his notes to *Ludwig Feuerbach*: "it is perhaps possible to notice that both chemistry and biology will probably utlimately come to molecular mechanics." [1892, p.488] For Stepanov, these words represented Plekhanov's explicit declaration of faith in mechanist science:

> [Plekhanov] says frankly that, with the development of science, mechanist opinions can transform both chemistry and biology. [I. Stepanov, 'Engel's i mekhanističeskoe ponimanie prirody', *PZM*, 1925, 8-9, p.53]

The same issue of *Pod znamene marksizma* printed the Deborinites' reply. A. Višnevskij attacked Stepanov for misunderstanding the meaning of Plekhanov's quotation. Plekhanov had always fought against any kind of reductionism, and he would have surely rejected his so-called followers' mechanist reductionism. [A. Višnevskij, 'V zaščitu materialističeskoj dialektiki (Otvet t. Stepanovu)', *PZM*, 1925, 8-9, pp.283-84] A few months later Deborin himself intervened. Although he acknowledged a certain hesitation in Plekhanov's quotation, such that it might arouse misunderstandings, Deborin recalled Plekhanov's view of sensation and consciousness in order to prove Plekhanov's anti-mechanism. He wrote:

> The faculty of matter for feeling and thinking represents a specifical and fundamental property or 'quality' of it, which can be reduced neither to mechanics, nor to any other kind of movement. And since sensation and consciousness are inherent in this or that degree of organic *life*, it follows that biology can be reduced neither to

mechanism, nor to physical and chemical processes.

Far from reckoning Plekhanov a vitalist or dualist, Deborin aimed at setting his master's dialectical monism against the Mechanists' "dead, metaphysical" monism. [A. Deborin, 'Engels i dialektičeskoe ponimanie prirody', *PZM*, 1925, 10-11, pp.19-20]

Consistent with these opinions, Frankfurt, as a Deborinite, emphasized the strictly anti-redutionistic character of Plekhanov's psychology, which was to be the subject of his interesting monograph in 1930. [Ju.V. Frankfurt, *Plekhanov i metodologija psikhologii*, M.-L., 1930] According to Frankfurt, Plekhanov thought that the psyche was, on the one hand, "a property of our organism, of our nervous system", therefore something physically and spatially determinated, and, on the other hand, "a reflection of being, laying outside us." Frankfurt concluded in 1926:

> psyche, subjective emotional experiences, are the internal side of objective physiological mechanisms, a special property, a special quality, that does not merge with physiological mechanisms, that has its own special qualitative activity in the relationship between organism and external milieu. [Ju.V. Frankfurt, 'G.V. Plekhanov o psikhofizičeskoj probleme', *PZM*, 1926, 6, p.58]

In Frankfurt's opinion, Plekhanov's antireductionism led him to

> formulate the role and meaning of psychic inheritance on the one hand, and the influence of contemporary social milieu on the other. [Ju. Frankfurt, 'Plekhanov o dialektike v psikhologii', *VKA*, 1927, 22, pp.195; 201]

Conversely, Mechanists maintained that Plekhanov's views perfectly agreed with theirs. Struminskij emphasized that Plekhanov never stated that the psychic is absolutely and categorically irreducible to the physical. He merely took into account that "heat has been already studied as a kind of movement, while psyche has still to be studied as a kind of movement as well." According to Struminskij, Marxism acknowledged the parallelism of ideas and things, but not of spirit and matter, i.e. it acknowledged not an ontological, but a purely epistemological opposition, unlike the Deborinites who followed a strict psycho-physical parallelism. [V. Struminskij, 'Marksizm v sovremennoj psikhologii', *PZM*, 1926, 4-5, pp.143; 162-165] A.K. Timirjazev, one of the best known Mechanists, added:

> Nobody denies the 'specificity' of phenomena, but a real Marxist

> methodologist must not limit himself to ascertaining this specificity, he must *explain* it, and, moreover, dialectics requires that, while acknowledging specificity, we not forget that in nature there are no absolute borders (*hard and fast lines*) [in English in the original].

For Timirjazev, the Deborinites were unable to account for the unity existing beyond the apparent multiplicity, while the Mechanists' strict monism enabled them to account for both. [A. Timirjazev, 'Voskreščaet li sovremennoe estestvoznanie mekhaničeskij materializm XVIII stoletija?', *VKA*, 1926, 17, p.167]

The psycho-physical problem, the relationship between sensation and movement, consciousness and matter, were closely linked with the contemporaneous discussion of Spinozism, during which Mechanists and Deborinites again opposed one another. G.L. Kline long ago studied at length the Soviet interpretations of Spinoza in his *Spinoza in Soviet Philosophy* [London 1952], and here we shall consider only a few articles that tackle the relationship between Plekhanov and Spinoza as regards epistemological problems. Both Mechanists and Deborinites thought that Spinoza's view of the relation of consciousness and matter and, as a result, his theory of knowledge, were consistent materialist points in Spinoza's philosophy, and that Plekhanov had had them in mind as links between Marxism and Spinozism. The two groups, however, explained those elements in Spinoza's thought differently.

Deborinites deemed that the essential nucleus of Spinoza's materialism was his theory of substance as nature and matter, irrespective of his theological terminology. Spinoza was so attentive to the dialectic of finite and infinite, liberty and necessity, that he could point it out long before Hegel. On this ground Spinoza could correcly understand the complex and irreducible relationship between being and thinking. [A. Deborin, 'Mirovozzrenie Spinoz'y', *VKA*, 1927, 20, pp.5-29, tr. 'Spinoza's world-view', in G.L. Kline, *op.cit.*, pp.90-119; G. Dmitrev, 'Filosofija Spinoz'y i dialektičeskij materializm', *PZM*, 1926, 9-10, p.42] For example, according to Čumarev (a Deborinite), Plekhanov was right in making a strict link between Marxism and Spinozism, since Feuerbach's view of the "unity and difference of subject and object", was nothing else but the intemediary between Marxism and Spinoza's theory of attributes. [V. Čumarev, 'Recenzija: G.V. Plekhanov, «Osnovnye voprosy marksizma»', *PZM*, 1926, 3, pp.252-253]

By contrast, the Mechanists, first of all Ljubov' Aksel'rod, maintained that Spinoza's "substance" was the general conformity to laws, the mechanical causality that rules the whole of nature. According to the Mechanists, Spinoza was imbued with theology and not only in

his terminology. They therefore criticized the Deborinites for considering Spinoza as a materialist *tout court*, without paying enough attention to his 'theological' and 'speculative' temper. [L.I. Aksel'rod, 'Spinoza i materializm', *Krasnaja Nov.*, 1925, 7; tr. 'Spinoza and Materialism', in G.L. Kline, *op.cit.*, pp.61-89]

Deborin, on his side, criticized L. Aksel'rod's opinion that mechanical causality was the basis of Spinoza's materialism, because that would lead Aksel'rod to regard contemporary positivism as materialism as well. Far from consistently developing Plekhanov's views, Mechanists, according to the Deborinites, were wholly "revisionists" in their understanding of Spinoza, although they hid themselves behind the "mask of orthodoxy" by referring to Plekhanov. [A. Deborin, 'Revizionizm pod maskoj ortodoksii', *PZM*, 1927, 9, pp.9-20]

Mechanists and Deborinites extended this argument to Plekhanov's understanding of Feuerbach's philosophy. Both groups found in Plekhanov's works the traces of Feuerbach's anthropological materialism. Sarab"janov, as a Mechanist, went so far as to state that the basic principles of Marxist philosophy came from Feuerbach, in particular the dependence of thinking on being, and the unity of subject and object. [V. Sarab"janov, 'Plekhanov-filosof', p.139] L.I. Aksel'rod maintained as well that "in the field of *pure* epistemology it was Feuerbach who put Hegel's dialectic on its feet." [L.I. Aksel'rod (Ortodoks), *Protiv idealizma*, M.-Pg. 1922, p.231] Also the Deborinites deemed Feuerbach one of the most influential thinkers in the whole history of Marxism, not only as regards Plekhanov. [see, for example: A. Deborin, *Ludwig Feuerbach*, M.-L., 1929] Still, they acknowledged some 'naturalistic' traits in Feuerbach's materialism. Deborin wrote:

> Feuerbach establishes a dependence of society and man on the conditions of natural milieu, on *nature*. Feuerbach proceeded from the *single individual*, not from *society*, as productive organization. [A.M. Deborin, 'Ludwig Feuerbach', *PZM*, 1923, 1, p.38]

Finally, the Deborinites and the Mechanists disagreed on Plekhanov's theory of hieroglyphics, although both groups had later been accused of having accepted it without any criticism. The former, in order to defend their master's orthodoxy, criticized his 'hieroglyphism' as a terminological inaccuracy, which Plekhanov himself had corrected in 1905. I.K. Luppol went so far as to state that "since 1905 Plekhanov stood on the same point of view as Lenin, maintaining the unity (not the identity) of thing-in-itself and

phenomenon." [I.K. Luppol, *Lenin i filosofija. K voprosu ob otnošenii filosofii i revoljucii*, s.l. 1930, p.60] The Mechanists, by contrast, approved Plekhanov's theory of knowledge, as Ljubov' Aksel'rod had done before the revolution, particularly in her critical review of Lenin's *Materialism and Empirio-Criticism* in 1909. *[Sovremennyj mir*, 1909, 7] That is why the Deborinites criticized their opponents for going further than Plekhanov himself in what Lenin had deemed a 'mistake'. While Plekhanov corrected his terminology in 1905, his mechanist followers still persisted in their misunderstanding. [M. Furščik, 'Ob odnoj "zaščite" dialektičeskogo materializma', *PZM*, 1928, 12, p.30; P. Vyšinskij, Ja. Levin, 'Ešče raz o mekhanistakh i o novoj putanice tov. Sarab"janova', *PZM*, 1930, 1, pp.19-20]

On their side, the Mechanists reproached the Deborinites for their identification of the concepts of 'property' (*svojstvo*) and 'quality' (*kačestvo*), since the Deborinites reduced both of them to 'objectivity'. According to the Mechanists, on the contrary, property was a state of the object which could be expressed as strictly quantitative, while quality was something subjective, that took place only within the subject-object relationship. Sarab"janov wrote:

> We are against the reduction, when 'sound' is identified with sound wave, when a thaler as sensation is identified with an objective thaler. But if we want to study sensations, we must study the different kinds of movement of a peculiarly organized (thinking, feeling) object, i.e., of the subject. [V. Sarab"janov, 'O nekotorykh spornykh problemakh dialektiki', *PZM*, 1925, 12, p.195]

The Deborinites objected that those opinions meant actually a great concession to Kantianism, since, as Stoljarov stated, once one acknowledged that human consciousness is conditioned by any objective trait, then the materialists' 'object' would have turned into Kant's thing-in-itself. [A. Stoljarov, 'Sub"ektivizm i marksizm', *PZM*, 1926, 1-2, pp.120-121]

In the second half of the 1920's Mechanists and Deborinites happened sometimes to dispute in public. For instance, on December 19, 1927 Nikolaj Karev and Ljubov' Aksel'rod debated at the Mejerkhold Theater on the understanding of dialectical materialism, and, particularly, on the relationship between empirical and rational moments in knowledge. L. Aksel'rod emphasized the real interaction of subject and object in knowledge, and the specific role of the empirical moment within sensation, [see, for instance: L.I. Aksel'rod, *V zaščitu dialektičeskogo materializma*, M.-L., 1928, pp.90-91] thereby earning the charge of yielding to vulgar empiricism. [V. Asmus, 'L.I.

Aksel'rod i filosofija', *PZM*, 1928, 9-10, p.54] Moreover, she extended Plekhanov's theory of sensation in order to maintain a "correspondence" of objects and concepts, not only of sensations and properties. Karev, on the contrary, regarded the concept as a "reflection" of the object:

> *not an immediate* reflection, but *a reflection mediated by our cerebral activity*, in consequence of which neither any concept nor any system of concepts represents reality in a certainly correct way, but only the system that underwent the test of practice, of experiment.

On this ground, Lenin's critique of Plekhanov's epistemology did not consist in denying the existence of things-in-themselves, as Ljubov' Aksel'rod thought, but in giving up any residual concession to agnosticism and Kantianism. [N. Karev, 'L. Aksel'rod na puti ot materializma k pozitivizmu', *PZM*, 1928, 9-10, p.25]

The polemics between the Mechanists and the Deborinites came to an end in 1929, with the latters' triumph. A few months after the Second Congress of the Marxist-Leninist Research Institutes in April, the Deborinites garnered all the key positions in institutes and editorial boards. As regards the relationship between matter and consciousness, Vyšinskij and Levin emphasized the Mechanists' defeat by definitively replacing the latters' representation of Plekhanov as hylozoist with the figure of Plekhanov as dialectical thinker, although sometimes inaccurate in his terminology. In particular, Vyšinskij and Levin admitted:

> Plekhanov does not carry on clearly enough his distinction of thinking as new specific quality, supposing that there is only a quantitative development of psychic properties, from inorganic bodies up to highest beings.

However, to regard Plekhanov as a hylozoist would have meant to ascribe too great a meaning to mere terminological questions. The two authors concluded:

> Here is Plekhanov's dialectical statement of the question: the thesis that being determines consciousness does not exclude (but, on the contrary, presupposes - we add) the 'animation' of matter. Plekhanov takes 'animation' in inverted commas, by which he meant that animation of matter is nothing on hand, actual, but it is something potential, possible. [P. Vyšinskij, Ja. Levin, 'Ešče raz o

mekhanistakh i o novoj putanice tov. Sarab"janova', p.24]

The Deborinites' views were thus wholly confirmed.

II. The Deborinites' victory, however, proved to be very fragile. Already in 1930 a new faction gathered, whose most important representatives were M. Mitin, P. Judin, and V. Ral'cevič. The new "orthodoxes" referred to a few of Stalin's speeches, in which he had emphasized a supposed gap between theory and praxis in contemporary Soviet society. Besides the usual critique of the Mechanists, they undertook a new attack against the Deborinites, accusing them of Hegelianism, abstractness, and, last but not least, too favorable an evaluation of Plekhanov's thought in comparison with the "Leninist stage in philosophy", which was becoming a very popular concept. Very soon new "orthodox" thinkers replaced Deborinites in institutes and editorial boards, and Plekhanov's ideas became one of the battle grounds of the "struggle on two fronts" that the new Party orthodoxy undertook. Since both Deborinites and Mechanists had acknowledged him as their "master", Plekhanov's reputation befell the common fate of both those group: an ever more severe criticism until the final "official" condemnation in 1931. Man'kovskij, for example, wrote:

> Mensheviking idealism [the name Stalin created to mean Deborin's "school", *D.S.*] is the 'continuation' of Plekhanov's errors, their elaboration into a peculiar neo-Hegelian system under the mask of Marxism, just as the Mechanist revision of Marxism is the 'continuation' and elaboration of Plekhanov's errors in the direction of mechanism, Machism, Kantianism, under the mask of Marxism and of the struggle against Hegelianism (*gegeljanščina*). While isolation of subject and object (theory of chance, of appearence, of primary and secondary qualities) is characteristic for Mechanists, for Mensheviking idealism is *characteristic* the separation of the object from the perceiving, feeling, living his social life subject. Therefore the object itself loses its material character and turns into an abstract logical essence, into a system of abstract categories. [L. Man'kovskij, 'K voprosu o filosofskikh istokakh men'ševistvujuščego idealizma', *PZM*, 1931, 6, p.62]

Of course, the heterodox Plekhanov, as the source of his even more heterodox followers' mistakes, was now being counterposed more often and more sharply to Lenin, the unquestionable father of both theoretical and political orthodoxy. At the end of 1930 Mitin stated: "The authentic history of the development of Marxism goes from

Marx-Engels to Lenin, and not through Plekhanov at all". [M. Mitin, 'K itogam filosofskoj diskussii', *PZM*, 1930, 11-12, p.40] Plekhanov's Marxism did not go any further than second International Marxism. [M. Mitin, 'K voprosy o leninskom etape v razvitii dialektičeskogo materializma', *PZM*, 1931, 7-8, p.16] Far from being Lenin's 'master', Plekhanov had been positively influenced by him several times. [for example: S. Šurygin, 'Protiv men'ševistvujure-idealističeskoj fal'sifikacii istorii filosofskoj bor'by Lenina', *PZM*, 1931, 9-10, pp.230-240] Even Plekhanov's fight against revisionism, his polemic with Bernstein and Bogdanov, which had been so highly regarded in the 1920's, was now criticized as abstract, since Plekhanov had allegedly disregarded the class roots of his antagonists' opinions. [P. Judin, 'Lenin i filosofskaja diskussija 1908-1910 gg.', *PZM*, 1931, 9-10, p.17] Vandek and Timosko wrote that "Plekhanov quite often brings Bernstein's and Struve's critique of Marxism to an academical dispute". [V. Vandek, V. Timosko, 'Kritika Plekhanovym filosofskogo revizionizma i ee osnovnye nedostatki', *VKA*, 1934, 5-6, p.29]

At that time Plekhanov's theory of knowledge became particularly interesting, since therein one could clearly see the contrast between Lenin's and Plekhanov's philosophical opinions. By opposing the theory of hieroglyphics and the theory of reflection, Soviet authors in the 1930's proved that Deborin's view about Lenin's 'descent' from Plekhanov was radically wrong. Lenin and Plekhanov stood on opposite positions as regards theory of knowledge, and it was not a meaningless or secondary contrast. Furščik wrote: "there cannot be a succesfull revolutionary praxis without a sound conviction that our knowledge *correctly* reflects reality. Praxis requires a clear theory." [M. Furščik, 'Filsofskie zametki', *PZM*, 1930, 10-12, p.81]

Plekhanov's hieroglyphics were much more than a "terminological error", as the Deborinites had maintained. According to Furščik, the theory of correspondence "is surely the caricature of the theory of co-ordination of being and thinking, of Engels' and Lenin's theory of reflection". It is inconsistent, since it "admits on principle a distortion" in the representation of the object.

> The theory of correspondence in Plekhanov's formulation means: we cannot know the thing-in-itself otherwise than through subjective images, but the latters are and will always be such that they represent the object not as it is, but deformed. ... Actually, the theory of correspondence is a materialist, but shyly-materialist theory. It ... insists that an object in reality corresponds to the subject's representation, but it includes a certain mistrust in knowledge, and, being metaphysical, it deprives human knowledge

> of the chance of more and more closely approaching the object, the absolute truth, by progressively overcoming the subjective element in knowledge. [M. Furščik, *op.cit.*, pp.71-72]

In the same issue of *Pod znamenem marksizma* P. Kučerov, by insisting on the combined influence of Feuerbach's anthropologism and Helmholtz's Kantianism, emphasized that Plekhanov considered knowledge in a basically ahistorical and therefore metaphysical way, taking the process of knowledge into a "subjectively psychological" consideration. [P. Kučerov, 'Lenin i teorija poznanija Plekhanova', *PZM*, 1930, 10-12, p.130]

Thus, it became impossible to maintain that in 1905 Plekhanov had corrected his previous mistakes. According to his "critics" of the 1930's, the second edition of *Ludwig Feuerbach* only changed Plekhanov's terminology, not his epistemology. Otherwise one could not explain why Lenin criticized "hieroglyphics" in 1908, when Plekhanov had already rejected them. [A. Maksimov, 'Lenin i krizis estestvoznanija epokhi imperializma', *PZM*, 1931, 1-2, p.31; I. Grekun, A. Makarov, 'Za voinstvujuščuju partijnost' v filosofii', *PZM*, 1931, 11-12, p.233] Plekhanov acknowledged the objective existence of things, which own certain properties, but he denied that one could know those properties as they really are. Furščik stated:

> The thing-in-itself itself remains somehow veiled, somehow curtained; it is not unknowable, it is not inaccesible, but it is not wholly knowable, it is not completely and without residues accessible; it is accessible and knowable by human being, but as far as human knowledge is conditioned by human organization, as far as he can give an adequate representation of it. [M. Furščik, *op.cit.*, p.75]

Not by chance, the same number of the review included a resolution of the bureau of the Institute of Red Professors, cell for philosophy and science, of December 29, 1930. Among many different charges against Deborin and his followers, there appeared "the strong influence of a whole series of erroneous moments in Plekhanov's political and philosophical views, that had been criticized by Lenin", Deborin's inadequate appraisal of Lenin as Marxist philosopher, his wrong understanding of the relationship between dialectics and theory of knowledge, "the separation between empirical and rational moments in knowledge, between sensation and thinking, between historical and logical moments, between form and contents". In all of the Deborinites' 'mistakes', Plekhanov's influence was supposed to have played a very important role. As for the Mechanists, they were condemned as well,

as a "clearly revisionist, anti-Marxist, anti-Leninist philosophical trend", for their "defence of 'hieroglyphic' theory of knowledge, and of Locke's theory of primary and secondary qualities, Kantian-agnostic misrepresentation of Lenin's doctrine about objective, relative and absolute truth, defence of Kantian menshevik extra-class ethics, etc." ['Itogi filosofskoj diskussii', *PZM*, 1930, 10-12, pp.15-24]

Plekhanov therefore was exposed to ever more severe condemnations. The military metaphor of "struggle on two fronts" turned into a violent political clash. Statements such as the following, which became usual at that time, testify of the general tone of theoretical dispute:

> In Soviet conditions revisionism tries to turn up Marxism under the banner of Mechanism, this *kulak* theory of right-wing deviation, and under the banner of Mensheviking idealism, the theory of any 'leftist' (*levoščkij*) kinks and counter-revolutionary Trotskism. [A. Saradžev, 'Materialističeskaja dialektika kak teorija poznanija i logika', *Front nauki i tekhniki*, 1934, 4, p.13]

Among the numerous faults of which Plekhanov and his various followers were accused was their over-estimation of Feuerbach's materialism and its influence on Marxism. Vyšinskij underlined in 1931: "[Deborinites] regard dialectical materialism (and this comes basically from Plekhanov ...), as a *synthesis* of Hegel's dialectic and Feuerbach's materialism, not as a critical re-elaboration of both". [P. Vyšinskij, 'L. Feuerbach v osveščenii men'ševistvujuščego idealizma i mekhanizma', *PZM*, 1931, 9-10, p.36] P. Kučerov analyzed the relationship between Plekhanov and Feuerbach as regards the theory of knowledge. He noticed that, while in Marx' opinion 'subject' was a social category, Feuerbach (and Chernyshevsky) proceeded from a biological understanding of organism in their epistemology. Plekhanov knew Feuerbach's work before Marx', and he kept regarding Feuerbach as his highest authority in epistemology all through his life. From him, Plekhanov drew certain traces of naturalistic materialism, such as reducing the concept of subject to "extra-historical contents". Kučerov pointed out:

> Man's biological relationship with the object is a presupposition of the social-historical dialectics of subject and object, but working, economic and knowing activities take place only in social history. [P. Kučerov, 'Lenin i teorija poznanija Plekhanova', *PZM*, pp.119-120]

A few months earlier, Kučerov had written on the same subject:

> Plekhanov, reducing Marxian critique to the level of a mere addition to Feuerbach's theory of knowledge, passed over the essence of the problem. ... if all the essence of Marxism, as Plekhanov thinks, consists only in the fact that our 'I' for his part influences the object, then Marx would have not overcome epistemological metaphysics. According to Plekhanov's distinction between Marx and Feuerbach, Marxism is only one of the numerous answers to the question, how individual as such approaches external world. ... [However] The main point is not that, staying on Feuerbach's base, Marx emphasized individual activity, but that he understood subject and object as forms of manifestation of the whole social-historical praxis. The main point is not the creation of one more system of epistemological metaphysics, but the whole overcoming of it. [P. Kučerov, 'Praktika kak edinstvo sub"ekta i ob"ekta', *PZM*, 1929, 5, p.37]

In Kučerov's opinion, hieroglyphical theory of knowledge was wholly consistent with the general lines of Plekhanov's epistemology:

> Plekhanov, inclining to contemplative materialism, and disregarding the meaning of social-historical praxis for the solution of epistemological problems, does not give a clear formulation of the question of knowledge of objective essence of things, of the approaching of absolute truth by our knowledge. If one considers from this point of view Plekhanov's mistake about the problem of 'hieroglyphics', the dualism that turns out between object and knowledge will not seem casual. [P. Kučerov, 'Lenin i teorija poznanija Plekhanova', *VKA*, 1931, 2-3, p.52]

Kučerov's last quoted article was originally a lecture at the Communist Academy, and the Academy's review reported the discussion that took place about Kučerov's opinions, the main topics of which were still the evaluation of Feuerbach's influence on Plekhanov and the latter's theory of knowledge. Apropos of the first question, V. Ditjakin suggested a very odd interpretation of the relationship between Plekhanov and Feuerbach. Instead of studying Plekhanov's knowledge and readings on Feuerbach, Ditjakin put forward the following hypothesis:

> Feuerbach could be close to Plekhanov since elements of great kinship were in their common political orientation. Plekhanov's positions, his attitude to the next tasks of workers' movement in Russia before and during the revolution of 1905, were close to the

> position that Feuerbach held before and during the revolution of 1848 ... . Plekhanov's ideological kinship with Feuerbach is, as a matter of fact, an ideological affinity between Russian opportunism in his menshevist form and the left wing of bourgeois-democratic movement in its heroical epoch. ['Prenija po dokladu', *VKA*, 1931, 2-3, p.62]

Bobrovnikov rejected Ditjakin's hypothesis by discussing the links between Feuerbach and Plekhanov only at a theoretical level. For him, as for Kučerov, Feuerbach's anthropological materialism negatively influenced Plekhanov's epistemology:

> The physiological point of view on the unity of subject and object, that Plekhanov took from Feuerbach (and Plekhanov undoubtedly took it uncritically), brings to mistakes of subjectivist and Kantian character. [*ibid.* p.65]

Českis, on the contrary, objected that Feuerbach's and Chernyshevsky's influence on Plekhanov had not been determinant at all:

> Any philosopher takes something from his forerunners. Plekhanov took from Chernyshevsky what he could take. ... The main root of his mistakes lies [rather] in his *incomprehension of revolutionary dialectics*.

The theory of hieroglyphics itself, far from being Plekhanov's basic mistake, was nothing but a consequence of his misunderstanding of dialectics and, in particular, of the law of the unity of opposites. As for Plekhanov's belief that to know the object means to know its properties, Českis rejected that it was a clear sign of Plekhanov's supposed agnosticism:

> Plekhanov did not oppose properties to essence, but on the contrary emphasized the unity between the essence of the object and its properties, since the essence shows itself in the properties. [*ibid.* pp.67-70]

Gejlikman, a Mechanist who then rejected his former opinions, took part in the discussion as well. As if he proved his whole adhesion to the new Party orthodoxy, he roughly criticized both his former companions and the Deborinites. He said:

> It is interesting to notice that as for the evaluation of Plekhanov one

> observes a moving solidarity between the Mechanists and the representatives of Deborin's school. Both of them regard equally uncritically Plekhanov's theory of knowledge.

According to Gejlikman, on the contrary, in Plekhanov's epistemology one should point out a double mistake:

> On the one hand, in Plekhanov we have Feuerbachianism, his overestimation, his idealization of anthropological materialism. On the other hand, a Kantian deviation, bounded with theory of hieroglyphics. [*ibid.* p.79]

A few months later Grekun and Makarov confirmed that Plekhanov had combined the influences of Feuerbach's anthropologism and Kantianism in his epistemology, and blamed Kučerov for having criticized Plekhanov, but having at the same time accepted his works as "classics". [I. Grekun, A. Makarov, 'Za voinstvujuščuju partijnost' v filosofii', pp.229-230]

In the 1930's Kant was more and more often mentioned as one of Plekhanov's most meaningful philosophical referents, together with Feuerbach and Spinoza. In 1931 *Pod znamenem marksizma* published Plekhanov's first thoughts from 'Ob ekonomičeskom faktore', which represents the moment of Plekhanov's greatest tolerance toward the possible presence of different philosophical points of view, including Kantianism, among Marxists. [1931] On this ground Mitin and Takser pointed out Plekhanov's "Kantianism". [M. Mitin, 'K voprosu o leninskom etape v razvitii dialektičeskogo materializma', p.17; A. Takser, 'K vpervye opublikovannoj stat'e G.V. Plekhanova "Ob ekonomičeskom faktore (Pervonačal'noj redakcii)"', *PZM*, 1931, 4-5, p.47] Plekhanov's theory of hieroglyphics was then considered a typical Kantian "mistake", and thereby its bourgeois and revisionistic character was shown. [A. Saradžev, 'Materialističeskaja dialektika kak teorija poznanija i logika', p.11; V. Vandek, V. Timosko, 'Kritika Plekhanovym filsofskogo revizionizma...', p.33]

In this period Soviet scholars contrasted Plekhanov's epistemology to Marxist orthodoxy, also by emphasizing that Plekhanov misunderstood dialectics, as Lenin himself had pointed out in his notes about dialectics, which were published in 1925. ['K voprosu o dialektike', now in *Filosofskie tetradi*] Kučerov concluded that Plekhanov's weak mastery of dialectics explained his sympathy for materialist pre-Marxian epistemologies:

> For Plekhanov, theory of knowledge represents a particular field, a particular circle of problems. The problem of subject and object, of the criterion of knowledge, of the potentialities and limits of knowledge - all these problems for Plekhanov are autonomous, independent of the problems of dialectics.

Even when Plekhanov stated that without dialectics any materialistic epistemology is impossible, [1905b, p.83]

> [he] did not put forward the character of reciprocal dependence between dialectics and theory of knowledge, yet; he just pointed out the existence of this link in the most general form. [P. Kučerov, 'Lenin i teorija poznanija Plekhanova', *PZM*, pp.131, 133]

Plekhanov's disregard of dialectics, according to the physicist A. Maksimov, was conditioned by "his abstract understanding of epistemology, i.e., his incomprehension of its organic link with methodology, his incomprehension of the identity of epistemology and logic." [A. Maksimov, 'Lenin i kriziz estestvoznanija epokhi imperializma', p.33] In other words, Plekhanov based his theory of knowledge on the psychological problem of sensation, thereby separating epistemology from the problems of logic and scientific methodology. Plekhanov's understanding of logic itself came up in the debate. Vajsberg wrote:

> Plekhanov regards logic not as theory of knowledge, not as science of the general laws of all material and spiritual things, but *it is considered in bourgeois philosophy.*

Plekhanov placed side by side formal logic, defined as the logic of absolute oppositions, and dialectics, as the logic of transitions and changes. The two fields therefore were separated in their territories, but they were contiguous, which allowed Plekhanov to keep bourgeois philosophical tradition, although he declared himself a dialectical materialist. [I. Vajsberg, 'Formal'naja logika i dialektika. Plekhanov kak kritik formal'noj logiki', *Problemy marksizma*, 1931, 5-6, pp.177; 184-189]

A few years later, M. Kammari criticized Plekhanov for not having considered the relationship between formal logic and dialectics from a historical point of view. According to Kammari,

> Plekhanov was right in showing against revisionists, neo-Kantians, etc., that "... without dialectics *a materialistic theory of knowledge* is incomplete, unilateral, let's say more: *impossible*".

> But here as well Plekhanov did not pay any attention to the fact that materialistic doctrine is also the (logical) theory of knowledge of Marxism. For Plekhanov dialectics is one thing, theory of knowledge is another one, although it is 'incomplete', 'unilateral', 'impossible' without dialectics. [M. Kammari, 'O russkom perevode raboty Engel'sa «L. Feuerbach»', *Kniga i proletarskaja revoljucija*, 1938, 2, p.61]

The double critique of Plekhanov's epistemology on the basis of his pre-Marxian sources and his misunderstanding of dialectics was "officially" ratified as of the beginning of the 1930's by Party authorities. Accounting for Stalin's letter to the editorial staff of the review *Proletarskaja revoljucija* ['O nekotorykh voprosakh istorii bol'sevizma', 1931, 6 (113), pp.3-12], and for the newest positions of the Party on the "philosophical front", the new editorial staff of *Pod znamenem marksizma* noted:

> Plekhanov's fundamental failing as regards his understanding of the philosophy of Marxism is the isolation of theory of knowledge from dialectics, which is a consequence of the gap between theory and praxis, ... Plekhanov in his theory of knowledge stood on Feuerbach's point of view, and at the same time made a concession to Kantianism, fell into agnosticism, and fighting against the Marxist-Leninist theory of reflection, pursued hieroglyphism. On the other hand, since he did not understand that the laws of materialistic dialectics have a general meaning, that they are the laws of both objective world and knowledge, Plekhanov side by side with dialectical logic kept metaphysical, formal logic, as a certain independent field, and expounded the laws of dialectics not as general laws of objective world and knowledge, but as 'sum of examples'. ['Pis'mo tov.Stalina, rešenija XVII vsesojuznoj konferencii i filosofskoj front', *PZM*, 1931, 9-10, pp.7-8]

In the general chorus of reproaches and critiques, very few voices raised in Plekhanov's defence. S. Batiščev was one of them. In a favourable review of a new edition of Plekhanov's anti-revisionist works, with a harshly critical preface [Vandek's and Timosko's already quoted article, that reappeared as 'Vstupitel'naja stat'ja', in G.V. Plekhanov, *Protiv filosofskogo revizionizma*, M. 1935, pp.5-34] Batiščev acknowledged that the recent condemnation of both the Mechanists and the Deborinites had led Marxists seriously to under-estimate Plekhanov:

> Our youth knows Plekhanov more as the theoretician of

> Menshevism, and knows him a little as the eminent popularizer of Marxist philosophy. And sometimes they show to the students Plekhanov's philosophical opinions, but they represent them as absolutely alien to Marxism, as a complete Kantianism or vulgar, mechanist materialism. [S. Batiščev, 'Recenzija: G.V. Plekhanov, «Protiv filosofskogo revizionizma»', *PZM*, 1936, 5, p.162]

During the 1930's, however, Plekhanov's success was waning even among his most direct followers. Many among the Mechanists and the Deborinites were revising their former opinions, and to criticize Plekhanov and his "bad influence" became the accepted way to demonstrate sincerity in one's owm "repentance". Sarab"janov was one of the first to retract his views during a scientifical session of the Philosophical Institute of the Communist Academy, whose papers were thereafter published in the Academy review in March 1933. He stated:

> Plekhanov enjoyed enormous authority among people of my generation, particularly among those who belonged to Menshevik organization ... I and many of our Mechanist group, like of Mensheviking idealists as well, according to my profound conviction, were so subjugated by Plekhanov's philosophy, that both absolutely disregarded the Leninist stage.

Sarab"janov criticized Plekhanov's theory of knowledge, thereby rejecting his former view that Plekhanov's epistemological "mistake" was merely the result of his terminological inaccuracy. Sarab"janov pointed out three other of Plekhanov's "mistakes" as methodological basis of hieroglyphism:

> in the first place, his logicism, in second place, his incomprehension that praxis is the only reliable criterion of truth, and, in third place, his sliding on the surface of the problem of subject and object. ['Materialy naučnoj sessii instituta filosofii Komakademii', *PZM*, 1933, 3, p.137]

During the session of the Philosophical Institute of the Communist Academy on June, 20-23, 1934, on the occasion of the 25th anniversary of Lenin's *Materialism and Empirio-Criticism*, Ljubov' Aksel'rod herself took the opportunity to revise her critique of Lenin's theory and her defence of hieroglyphism. She said that 25 years later she could much better understand the meaning of Lenin's work. Moreover, according to her, the present historical situation, the increasing fight against Fascism, forced everybody to transcend any former grouping and ideological division. ['Sessija instituta filosofii

Komakademii', *VKA*, 1934, 4, p.94] On the same occasion the Mechanist Ja. Sten made amends for his under-estimation of the "Leninist stage in philosophy", too. Deborin, in his turn, attacked subjective idealism, particularly criticizing abstractness, for which his adversaries had recently blamed him. *[ibid.* p.95]

In the following years, Soviet scholars continued to criticize Plekhanov's philosophy, but with a diminishing ferocity. On the one hand, Plekhanov's "mistakes" became a commonplace in writings about pre-revolutionary Marxism. Thus, in 1937 A.V. Ščeglov listed Plekhanov's "serious mistakes of Kantian and Machist character" as follows:

> his 'theory of hieroglyphics', closed to Kantianism and agnosticism, his confusion in defining the concept of 'experience', his incomprehension that both idealist and materialist trends in philosophy can hide under the word 'experience', ... his wrong statement as if faith in the existence of external world is the inescapable '*salto vitale*' (vital jump) of philosophy, i.e., the existence of external world cannot be logically grounded. [A.V. Ščeglov, *Bor'ba Lenina protiv bogdanovskoj revizii marksizma*, M. 1937, p.120]

On the other hand, during the 1930's a few very interesting works on Plekhanov's epistemology came out. Todor Pavlov, for example, devoted a part of his monograph on the theory of reflection to an analysis of Plekhanov's theory of knowledge. Although this review began with the consecrated condemnations, Pavlov managed to defend Plekhanov against Sarab"janov, who had gone so far as to accuse his former master of having denied the adequacy of our representations to things, which was clearly shown in Plekhanov's use of the well-known Spencerian comparison of cube and cylinder. [V. Sarab"janov, 'Predislovie', in *Filosofskoe učenie Marksa, Khrestomatija po Plekhanovu*, M., 1933, p.IX] Pavlov countered that one should look for Plekhanov's mistakes somewhere else. Marx and Engels as well had never maintained that our sensations are absolutely and wholly adequate to things.

> Plekhanov's weak point therefore is not in this or in similar examples and statements. Here he stands on a materialistic, although inconsistent, point of view. His weak point, his radical error begins when he goes further than this Spencerian shyly materialistic comparison, when he denies *any* resemblance, *any* likeness between image and object, and thereby he turns the image into a

mere sign or symbol.

Instead of developing the dialectical thesis according to which subjective and objective "are and are not the same thing", Plekhanov therefore tended toward Kantian agnosticism.

Plekhanov's criticism of "hieroglyphic" terminology, according to Pavlov, hid his basic misunderstanding of dialectics, since his criticism was understandable only if coming from a metaphysical view of the relationship between quality (*kačestvo*) and property (*svojstvo*).

> Plekhanov's idea that 'thing-in-itself' cannot be deprived of all its qualities, and nevertheless have some properties, for instance the property of provoking sensations of calor, odor, etc. in us, directly leads to the assertion that relations are possible without what relates itself, that movement is possible without what moves and changes, that reciprocal action is possible without interacting objects.

And further:

> The fundamental trouble in the theory of hieroglyphics, like in any metaphysical materialism, consists ... in its incapacity to understand the dialectical unity (identity in difference) of object and image, their reciprocal negation and reciprocal changes, in one word its incapacity to apply dialectics to the process and development of knowledge.

In conclusion,

> the theory of hieroglyphics, by metaphysically opposing sensations (representations, concepts, etc.) to object, in first place denies the possibility of likeness of image and object, i.e., it denies the presence of anything common between them, it turns them into things belonging to two different worlds, and, in the second place, by not trusting our sensations, it leads to the agnostic denial of the chance of knowing the existence of the objective, external world, and, at the end, it leads to subjective idealism.

As for the origins of the theory of hieroglyphics, Pavlov did not ascribe to Helmholtz a direct influence on Plekhanov. He, however, explained that Lenin criticized Helmholtz and not Sečenov, since

> in Sečenov there are attempts at reconciliation between [theory of hieroglyphics] and theory of reflection, which also led Plekhanov to mistake, since therein he saw a correct materialist theory of

knowledge. [T. Pavlov (P. Dosev), *Teorija otraženija. Očerki po teorii poznanija dialektičeskogo materializma*, M.-L., 1936, pp.133-141]

Pavlov paid some attention to the problem of primary and secondary qualities as well, since in his opinion it was "nothing but a different formulation of the same problem of absolute identity or absolute opposition of object and image". While going through recent disputes, Pavlov noted:

> repeating and deepening Locke's mistakes, the Mechanists acknowledged the objective existence of the so-called 'primary' qualities ..., while they turned 'secondary' qualities ... into subjective qualities and properties, not given within things themselves. Mensheviking idealists in their turn, under the pretence of defending the objectivity of 'secondary' qualities, went on to deny the objectivity of both 'secondary' and 'primary' qualities, since they turned matter itself into 'a complex of links and relations' without what links and relates, i.e. without matter. [*ibid.* p.150]

M. Zak agreed on the connection between the question of primary and secondary qualities and theory of hieroglyphics, too. He wrote:

> the supporters of the theory of 'hieroglyphics', in order to confirm their positions on the dissimilarity of 'appareance' of things and things themselves, always referred to the fact that the objective ground of the 'appareance' of things, unlike the 'appearence' itself, has no qualitative, but quantitative, mechanical, at best generally physical, character.

In particular, the Mechanists considered the theory of hieroglyphics as a theory of subjectivity of secondary qualities, while Deborin and his followers considered them as two separate and independent theories. According to Zak,

> one might define hieroglyphism, on the one hand, as agnosticism of Kantian trend, on the other, as a mechanist and metaphysical solution of the problem of so-called 'secondary' properties of the objects.

In his opinion, hieroglyphism was built on the groundless hypothesis that objects have no non-mechanical qualities, and that these qualities arise only within knowledge as reciprocal action, when human sense organs are involved. As a consequence, the distinction between theory

of reflection and theory of hieroglyphics was neither a merely terminological question, nor a problem of similarity or dissimilarity of copy and original, but the question of existence or non-existence of the original itself. From this point of view, according to Zak, Plekhanov did not wholly revise his "mistakes" in 1905. On the one hand, by eliminating the term 'hieroglyphic', he was more likely to admit a certain similarity between knowledge and object. But, on the other hand, he more and more strenghtened his opinion that secondary properties are exclusively subjective. [M. Zak, 'Vopros o "pervičnykh" i "vtoričnykh" kačestvakh veščej i marksistskaja teorija otraženija', *PZM*, 1941, 3, pp.112, 125-129]

In the 1940's the study of Plekhanov's theory of knowledge and, in general, of his thought, came to a standstill. Between 1934 and 1940, eight volumes of unpublished documents and writings, edited by *Dom Plekhanova*, had been published [*Literaturnoe nasledie G.V. Plekhanova*, M.], but this work was not completed. The last volume anticipated its "second part", which never appeared. The activity of *Dom Plekhanova* in preparing the academic edition of Plekhanov's works was interrupted. [T.A. Filimonova, T.A. Arkušenko, 'Aktual'nye problemy izučenija literaturnogo nasledija i dejatel'nosti G.V. Plekhanova', in *Plekhanovskie čtenija. 30.05-31.05.88. Tezisy dokladov*, L. 1988, p.27] The history of Marxism, as Stalin had outlined it in his *Short Course*, did not permit scholars to study Plekhanov seriously. Stalin had denied Plekhanov's political role after 1903, while the figure of Lenin, as Marx' and Engels' direct heir, obscured Plekhanov's role as a theoretist. A.N. Šemjakin's opinion, although focused only on Plekhanov's psychology, is somehow typical of that time. He wrote:

> In his statements on psychological questions, Plekhanov in a number of cases undoubtedly admitted serious mistakes, which partly is a consequence of the fact that Plekhanov did not have sufficient grounding in the natural sciences; but the basic reason is Plekhanov's deviation from the revolutionary essence of Marxism. To that must be added the negative influence of contemporary bourgeois literature on natural science. [A.N. Šemjakin, 'K voprosu o vzgljadakh G.V. Plekhanova na otnošenie psikhiki k ideologii', *Materialy Universitetskoj psikhologičeskoj kafedry*, L., 1949, p.119. See also: A.N. Šemjakin, *Nekotorye osnovnye problemy psikhologii XIX v. v traktovke G.V. Plekhanova*, L., 1948]

Almost ten years passed until Plekhanov became again a subject of wide and comprehensive studies. In 1955 Fomina's monograph

appeared, thereby establishing its author as a very important Plekhanov scholar. Her work was a complete analysis of Plekhanov's philosophical views, particularly memaningful since it appeared after a long period of almost total silence on this subject. Fomina's work, however, represented more a collection of the "orthodox" interpretations of Plekhanov's thought, all of which Soviet scholars had been sharing until then, than a development of original ideas. As regards epistemology, Fomina stated that Plekhanov had been directly influenced by Helmholtz, which a few authors had already maintained, for instance Kaganov in his edition of Sečenov's *Collected Works*. [V. Kaganov, 'I.M. Sečenov', in I.M. Sečenov, *Izbrannye filosofskie i psikhologičeskie proizvedenija*, M., 1947, pp.58-60] Fomina wrote:

> Sečenov basically rightly understood the problem, in spite of single inexact formulations, the presence of which becomes wholly clear, if one takes into account that he was first of all a naturalist, not a specialist-philosopher. Not Sečenov, but Helmholtz is the source of Plekhanov's agnostic hesitations. Plekhanov followed Helmholtz, who denied likeness between 'conventional signs', or 'hieroglyphics', and the objects that they represent.

Nor had Plekhanov's terminological revision in 1905 really changed his view. Moreover, Plekhanov had over-estimated Feuerbach's influence on Marx, going so far as to identify their theories of knowledge as one, and thereby disregarding the meaning of social praxis in Marxist epistemology. Finally,

> in spite of his statements that theory of knowledge is impossible without dialectics, Plekhanov was not always able to approach the process of genesis of knowledge and its development in a dialectical way, and not infrequently he raised the problems of theory of knowledge in a metaphysical way. [V.A. Fomina, *Filosofskie vzgljady G.V. Plekhanova*, M., 1955, pp.166-168]

And Fomina, of course, strictly connected Plekhanov's misunderstanding of dialectics with his political Menshevism. [*ibid.* pp.287-288]

III. De-Stalinization led Soviet historians to change radically their attitude toward Plekhanov. Thus, on the centenary of Plekhanov's birth, on October 16, 1956, the Central Committee of CPSU passed a resolution, in which they mentioned "G.V. Plekhanov's merits in Russian and international revolutionary movements, his role as the first

eminent propagandist of Marxist ideas in Russia, and as the fighter for an exact materialistic world-view". The Central Committee decided "to publish articles in the central newspapers and social-political reviews, and also to organize radio transmissions about G.V. Plekhanov." On December 11, the day of Plekhanov's birth, the Central Committee arranged a solemn meeting of social and Party organizations at the Bol'šoj Theater. With the task of making a speech they entrusted M.B. Mitin, the same thinker who had been leading the previous polemics against Plekhanov, but who had quickly adapted himself to the new course - as his monograph on Plekhanov clearly shows. [*Istoričeskaja rol' G.V. Plekhanova v russkom i meždunarodnom rabočem dviženii*, M., 1957] The Central Committee, moreover, called several meetings of theoretical Party organizations and of the Academy of Sciences about Plekhanov. The Leningrad Mining Institute, where Plekhanov had studied, was named after him, and in his memory a few memorial tablets were erected. Finally, following Lenin's wishes, the Central Commettee ordered a new edition of Plekhanov's collected philosophical works, which were published between 1957-1961. ['O 100-letiju so dnja roždenija G.V. Plekhanova. Postanovlenie CK KPSS 16 oktjabrja 1956 goda', Spravočnik *partijnogo rabotnika*, M., 1957, pp.365-366] Thereafter five volumes of Plekhanov's philosophical works appeared, edited by M.I. Iovčuk, A.I. Maslin, P.N. Fedoseev, V.A. Fomina, and B.A. Čagin, with a conspicuous apparatus of indices. [*Izbrannye filosofskie proizvedenija*, M., 1956-1958] Many scholars greeted this publication with enthusiasm, since it overcame the lack of a textual apparatus in the preceeding edition. [for example: L.E. Jakobson, 'O naučnom apparate «Izbrannykh filosofskikh proizvedenij» G.V. Plekhanova', *VF*, 1957, 6, pp.173-176]

As a consequence of the Plekhanov centenary and of the CC resolution, many works were published in 1956, all of which devoted to the "eminent pioneer of Marxism in Russia". [for example: A. Il'in, *G.V. Plekahnov - vydajuščijsija pioner marksizma v Rossii*, M., 1956; S.F. Marčenjuk, *G.V. Plekhanov - vydajuščijsija teoretik i propagandist marksizma v Rossii*, Kiev, 1956] Of course, Soviet scholars in the middle of the 1950's especially appreciated the first period of Plekhanov's activity (1883-1903), since Plekhanov later "corrupted" himself with Menshevism, and fell into dogmatism and agnosticism. [for example: M.I. Sidorov, 'Razrabotka G.V. Plekhanovym istoričeskogo materializma', *VF*, 1956, 6, p.12] S.Ja. Kogan considered 1903 a real break in Plekhanov's philosophical and political opinions. He noted, however, that, after an extreme over-estimation of Plekhanov's philosophical merits at the middle of the 1920's, a unilateral and too harsh condemnation of his thought had

been dominating, negatively influenced by Stalin's *Short Course*. Kogan therefore concluded his article by suggesting that scholars study Plekhanov more seriously. [S.Ja. Kogan, 'G.V. Plekhanov - vydajuščijsja filosof-marksist (O zadačach izučenija filosofskogo nasledija Plekhanova)', *Naučnaja sessija 1956*, Odessa, 1956, pp.11-15] I.I. Čerkasov ascribed the same responsibility to Stalin's *Short Course*, emphasizing that this work had been written "under the influence of the cult of personality". [I.I. Čerkasov, 'O nekotorykh ošibkakh v osveščenii filosofskikh vzgljadov G.V. Plekhanova', *VF*, 1957, 1, p.228] In the same period, A.F. Okulov invited Soviet historians to consider Plekhanov in his historical milieu, in order to escape the "mistakes" that "have been made in the evaluation of Plekhanov's philosophical inheritance in the past years". [A.F. Okulov, 'Bor'ba G.V. Plekhanova protiv neokantianskoj revizii marksizma', *VF*, 1956, 6, p.23]

Yet in 1962, N.Ja. Suško showed so little respect for historical reality that he ascribed to Lenin's critique (1909) the merit of Plekhanov's own terminological revision (1905). [N.Ja. Suško, *Razvitie V.I. Leninym marksistskoj teorii poznanija*, M., 1962, p.245] In general, however, Plekhanov was thereafter more rigorously studied. Almost every work about Plekhanov began with the statement that a strict historical analysis was necessary. [see, for example: V.S. Kiladze, *Kritika idealizma v trudakh G.V. Plekhanova*, Avtoreferat, Tbilisi, 1967, p.5] Moreover, Soviet scholars started reflecting on the earlier historiography, outlining the general traits of Soviet interpretations of Plekhanov. On this line I.N. Kurbatova, for long time Director of *Dom Plekhanova* and great connoiseur of her author, wrote an interesting contribution to the *Philosophical Encyclopaedia*. [I.N. Kurbatova, 'Idejnaja bor'ba vokrug filosofskogo nasledija Plekhanova. Literatura o Plekhanove', *Filosofskaja enciklopedija*, M., 1967, t.4, pp.273-274; see also B. Čagin, *G.V. Plekhanov i ego rol' v razvitii marksistskoj filosofii*, pp.5-7; and, later, S.V. Tjutjukin, *Pervaja rossijskaja revoljucija i G.V. Plekhanov. Iz istorii idejnoj bor'by v rabočem dviženii Rossii v 1905-1907 gg.*, M., 1981, pp.11-33]

The general re-evaluation of Plekhanov's thought extended to his epistemology. Čerkasov went even so far as to maintain that Plekhanov parallelled the theory of reflection at least in his intents, although he used the wrong expressions. [I.I. Čerkasov, *op.cit.*, pp.226-227] Being more moderate, Azarenko listed Plekhanov's traditional "mistakes": his hylozoism, his hieroglyphics, his rare interest in praxis, his Feuerbachism. He went on to praise Plekhanov, however:

> Plekhanov explained the process of knowledge in a materialistic way ..., Plekhanov defended the materialistic position about the possibility of knowing the world ..., Plekahnov correctly resolved the question of truth of our knowledge. [E.Ja. Azarenko, 'Razvitie G.V. Plekhanovym filosofii marksizma', *Sbornik naučnykh trudov*, Minskij gos. med. in-t (Kaf. obš . nauk), t.XXII, 1958, pp.162-163]

Meanwhile, in the second half of the 1950's, Plekhanov's epistemology gave rise to new disputes. F.F. Kal'sin came back to Plekhanov's hieroglyphics, regarding sensation as composed of two elements: on the one hand, its "sensible form", i.e., "the sensible impression, which has the nature of a psychic reflection" - and Plekhanov's hieroglyphism was correct on this regard; on the other hand, the dependence of sensation on the objective properties of things. According to Kal'sin, it was wrong to reject terms such as 'hieroglyphic', 'sign', 'symbol', in accordance with Lenin's critique, as if those terms lead inevitably to agnosticism by themselves. Comparing Sečenov and Plekhanov, he aimed to show that it was possible to consider signs from a materialistic point of view. Kal'sin wrote:

> [in Plekhanov] not only impressions, as Sečenov says, but also sensations and representations are declared hieroglyphics, that "are not like" the events they designate. That is already agnosticism. ... Sečenov speaks about impression, that has psychical nature and is a sign. Plekhanov speaks about sensation and representation, i.e. of forms of knowledge, that he calls hieroglyphics. Sečenov says that forms and relations of sensible impressions 'correspond' to objective forms and relations among things. Therefrom one must take into account that with 'correspondence' he meant their likeness. ... Plekhanov [however] with 'correspondence' meant the relation of hieroglyphic with the reality, which it designates.

By 'correcting' himself in the second edition of *Ludwig Feuerbach*, Plekhanov definitively abandoned Sečenov's materialism.

> If one means with 'appearance' only the sensible impression that thing provokes in the subject, by acting on his nervous system, Plekhanov is right saying that beyond this action things have no appearance. But then one must say that things act not only on the human being, but also on the other things, they act reciprocally. In this reciprocal action the properties of the thing appear, which are

> different from the properties that show themselves in their 'appearance' by acting on the knowing subject.

Since Plekhanov concentrated his attention on the subject-object relationship, he did not go beyond the limits of Kantian agnosticism. [F. Kal'sin, *Osnovnye voprosy teorii poznanija*, Gorky, 1957, pp. 206-223]

Presnjakov and Kantemirov agreed that Plekhanov did not correct his ideas in 1905. He remained closer to Locke than to Kant, since he founded his opinions on the distinction between the secondary quality and the objective status of things. Unlike Kal'sin, however, Presnjakov and Kantemirov rejected any attempt to revive Plekhanov's hieroglyphism. By distinguishing the psychic meaning of reflection as 'symbol' from its cognitive meaning as 'image', Kal'sin had tried to reconcile Plekhanov's hieroglyphism with Lenin's theory of reflection, and ascribed to both of them a certain field of validity. But, in Presnjakov's and Kantemirov's opinion, Kal'sin twice misunderstood Plekhanov's theory: in the first place, Plekhanov did not consider the physiological role of symbols; in the second place,

> Plekhanov repeatedly stated that sensations-symbols exactly translate the links and relations among things. Kal'sin however affirms that our brain copies links and relations among things, and there the theory of hieroglyphics is no more applicable. He limits the sphere of applicability of the theory of hieroglyphics to the field of things and properties perceptible through our senses. [P.V. Presnjakov, D.S. Kantemirov, *Teorija poznanija dialektičeskogo materializma i učenia o 'pervičnykh i vtoričnykh kačestvakh'*, Alma-Ata 1959, pp.76-78]

During the 1950's no one other than Kal'sin took note of Plekhanov's epistemology, in spite of the wide interest that Plekhanov's thought in general aroused. In 1960 N.T. Sorokina, who wrote her dissertation on "a few problems of the theory of knowledge in Plekhanov's philosophical works (1898-1911)", could point out the general lack of literature on that topic. Yet her own work merely offered a careful reporting of the "canonical" views. [N.T. Sorokina, *Voprosy teorii poznanija v filosofskikh rabotakh G.V. Plekhanova (1898-1911 gg.)*, Avtoreferat, Gorky 1960]

During the following years, Plekhanov's epistemology was never considered at length. It is however possible to find the general lines of an interpretation in the voluminous essays, articles and monographs that have discussed Plekhanov's thought in general.

Since the 1960's there have been no more sweeping condemnations of Plekhanov's epistemology. Although counterposing, of course, the theory of reflection to the theory of hieroglyphics, Todor Pavlov pointed out in 1961:

> never and nowhere did Plekhanov deny the basic materialistic position: things and phenomena are objectively real, material, by acting on our sense organs they represent the objectively real root (or cause, ground, starting point) of human ideas - sensations, representations, concepts, categories, etc.

According to Pavlov, Plekhanov's "mistake" therefore was not in his theory of sensation, but in his view of the peculiar relationship between sensation and object. [T.D. Pavlov, 'Skholastika i empirizm. Teorija otraženija i teorija ieroglifov', *VF*, 1961, 7, p.107]

In the same year, Čagin expressed his regard for Plekhanov's interest in "the complexity of reflection". Plekhanov, however, was too engaged in his polemic against everyone who somehow maintained the identity of subject and object, and he ended up emphasizing too much the subjective moment in knowledge. [B.A. Čagin, *Iz istorii bor'by protiv filosofskogo revizionizma v germanskoj social-demokratii, 1895-1914*, M.-L., 1961, pp.130-131] A few years later, in his monograph, Čagin criticized again some erroneous formulations of agnostic and Kantian trend in Plekhanov's works, but at the same time he approved Plekhanov's regarding praxis as a criterion of truth and his understanding of truth as the exact correspondence of knwoledge and reality. [B.A. Čagin, *G.V. Plekhanov i ego rol' v razvitii marksistskoj filosofii*, pp.70-75]

Such an evaluation became the new "orthodox" view on Plekhanov's epistemology. In the *Philosophical Encyclopaedia* in 1967, M.T. Iovčuk wrote:

> While criticizing Kant's and neo-Kantian's idealism and agnosticism, Plekhanov emphasized the knowability of the world ..., although there are also single inexact formulations of this problem (for instance, his acritical attitude toward the 'theory of hieroglyphics'...). [M.T. Iovčuk, 'G.V. Plekhanov', in *Filosofskaja enciklopedija,* t.4, M., 1967, p.272]

It is not surprising that in 1967 P.A. Nikolaev came back to Deborin's old view according to which hieroglyphics were a mere terminological mistake. Nikolaev stated:

> Plekhanov's epistemological outline is very simple and ...

> absolutely exact, although there he paid a tribute to Kantian terminology, that he used during his period of enthusiasm for 'hieroglyphics'. [P.A. Nikolaev, *Estetika i literaturnye teorii G.V. Plekhanova*, M., 1968, p.85]

Čagin and Kurbatova as well, dwelling upon the question in their common monograph on Plekhanov, declared:

> all those incorrect formulations and mistakes give no ground to talk about Plekhanov's erroneous line in the questions of theory of knowledge as a whole. In polemics with Kant, Hume and their most recent followers, he basically held to a Marxist position, though preferring the concept of 'correspondence' in resolving the problems of reciprocal action between subject and object.

They, however, pointed out Plekhanov's epistemological "mistakes", and regarded his theory of knowledge as the weakest point in his thought. [B.A. Čagin, I.N. Kurbatova, *Plekhanov*, M., 1973, p.142]

V.P. Fedotov, in the mid-60's, highly appreciated the fact that Plekhanov acknowledged the objective contents of sensations and at the same time insisted on their irreducible subjective moment:

> Plekhanov discovered the opposition of Marxist philosophy and vulgar materialism. In this opposition he resolutely emphasized the subjective moment of sensations, without allowing the slightest doubt that as for their contents they are identical with 'things-in-themselves'.

In other words, it was to Plekhanov's credit that he "raised the question of dialectical relation between subjective and objective in knowledge." [V.P. Fedotov, 'Bor'ba G.V. Plekhanova protiv filosofskogo revizionizma bernštejniancev i "legal'nykh marksistov"', in *Rasprostranenie idej marksistskoj filosofii v Evrope (konec XIX - načalo XX vekov)*, L., 1964, pp.131-132]

Subjective elements within knowledge were, meanwhile, more and more widely considered in Soviet studies, and these sometimes came close to Plekhanov's expressions. For instance, R.Ju. Gubajdullin stated in his methodological introduction to a scholarly article that

> the form of reflection (mental image of object) is determined not only by a given concrete object, but also by the system of concepts available in the knowing subject's head, that has formed in him as a result of his learning the achievements of human knowledge and on the ground of his practical activity. [R.Ju. Gubajdullin, 'K ocenke

abstraktno-logičeskogo metoda ideologov revoljucionnogo narodničestva', *Sbornik aspirantskikh rabot. Obšč. nauki. Istorija KPSS. Filosofija*, č. I, Kazan' 1967, p.163]

A few years later, Frolov came very close to the theory of "correspondence", also in his terminology:

> The knowability of properties of the external world means not the identity of properties of objects and sensations ..., but their epistemological correspondence, that, since the human being's genesis, has been allowing him to receive all the necessary knowledge for his biological survival and social development.

And further:

> epistemological correspondence between objective properties of things and their subjective image, which arises in sensations, perceptions, representations, is the consequence of the action of specific stimulants, the result of biological and social evolution of human cognitive faculties. [V.V. Frolov, 'O gnoseologičeskom sootvetstvii svojstv vnešnikh ob"ektov i oščuščenij', *Naučno-tekhničeskaja konferencija po itogam naučno-issledovatel'skikh rabot za 1970 g.*, M., 1971, p.91]

Besides such a "theoretical" interest in the theory of correspondence, during the 1960's-70's a certain "historical" interest in Plekhanov's epistemology appeared, particularly as regards the discussed relationship between the theory of hieroglyphics and its fore-runners in physiology, i.e., Helmholtz's and Sečenov's views. During the 1950's the opinion that Plekhanov drew his epistemological "mistake" from Helmholtz, rather than from Sečenov, prevailed. I.D. Panckhava, for instance, maintained: "Sečenov's 'sensible sign' is not a 'conventional sign', as in Helmholtz, but a subjective image similar to the object." Plekhanov referred to Sečenov, instead of Helmholtz, since he misunderstood Sečenov's thought. [I.D. Panckhava, 'Istoričeskoe značenie knigi V.I. Lenina «Materializm i empiriokriticizm»', in *Kniga V.I. Lenina «Materializm i empiriokriticizm», važnejšij etap v razvitii marksistskoj filosofii*, M., 1959, p.22]

Some scholars explained Plekhanov's "misunderstanding" of Sečenov's opinions as a function of the more or less direct influence which Helmholtz's Kantianism had on him. Thus, in his lecture on the theory of reflection in dialectical materialism, A.N. Gerasimov spoke about "the great German Kantian scientist Helmholtz's influence" on Plekhanov; [A.N. Gerasimov, *Tema: "Teorija otraženija. Dialektika*

processa poznanija", lekcija po kursu: "Dialektičeskij materializm", Rostov-na-Donu, 1958, p.12] G.M. Vartanjan used the word "contagion"; [G.M. Vartanjan, *O dialektike processa poznanija, lekcija po kursu filosofii*, Erevan, 1959, p.27] I.D. Andreev stated that "Plekhanov shared Helmholtz's 'theory of symbols'". [I.D. Andreev, *Osnovy teorii poznanija*, M., 1959, p.243] According to V.M. Kaganov, "Plekhanov's 'hieroglyphic materialism' in its essence and its spirit corresponds to Helmholtz's point of view, not to Sečenov's". [V.M. Kaganov, 'Nekotorye voprosy teorii poznanija v trudakh I.M. Sečenova', *VF*, 1956, 3, p.86]

During the 1950's the official interpretation of the *History of Philosophy* of the Academy of Sciences became "canonical". It maintained that Plekhanov uncritically approached Helmholtz's theory, and that he, consequently, ended up making great concessions to agnosticism. [*Istorija filosofii v šesti tomakh*, t.IV, M. 1959, pp.170-171] This view was variously echoed in all the subsequent literature. [for example: M.T. Iovčuk, *G.V. Plekhanov i ego trudy po istorii filosofii*, M., 1960, p.47; A.B. Ščeglov, *Iz istorii bor'by V.I. Lenina za dialektičeskij materializm*, Perm' 1960, p.111] Lenin's authority itself was here involved, since Lenin in *Materialism and Empirio-Criticism*, as Kaganov wrote,

> considered necessary to show the errouneousness of Plekhanov's theory of 'hieroglyphics' through his critical analysis of Helmholtz's views, and not Sečenov's, although Lenin knew also Sečenov's corresponding works. [V.M. Kaganov, *op.cit.*, p.86]

To ascribe to Helmholtz a direct influence on Plekhanov meant therefore to justify Lenin's choice, as well.

In 1956, however, M.G. Jaroševskij posed the question in a wholly different and more "historical" manner. He wrote:

> Plekhanov indicated Sečenov as the author, from whom he had drawn his 'hieroglyphic' understanding of sensible knowledge. In our philosophical and psychological literature this question has been widely discussed, but, in our opinion, has been unilaterally interpreted. Most authors came to the conclusion that Plekhanov's statements about his ideal closeness to Sečenov are groundless, since they correctly notice an opposition between Sečenov's and Helmholtz's philosophical lines ..., and they read Lenin's critique of Plekhanov's erroneous positions. Plekhanov's epistemological views on this problem come not from Sečenov, but from Helmholtz - this is the opinion that has been generally accepted. [M.G.

Jaroševskij, 'G.V. Plekhanov i I.M. Sečenov', *VF*, 1956, 6, p.213]

But when they are examined in their historical milieu, Sečenov's opinions cease to be agnostic, and, in fact, they can be viewed as being hostile to agnosticism. Plekhanov, who was influenced by Sečenov and not by Helmholtz, regarded the former as a consistent defender of materialism, as did his contemporaries. His references to Sečenov, therefore, did not constitute a concession to agnosticism at all. More than once Jaroševskij dwelled on this subject, clarifying with equal rigour both the relationship between Sečenov and Helmholtz, and the evolution of Plekhanov's epistemology through his rejection of 'hieroglyphics' but not of the theory of correspondence. Thereby Jaroševskij made a fundamental contribution to Plekhanov's studies. [see also: M.G. Jaroševškij, *Problema determinizma v psikhofiziologii XIX veka*, Dusfšanbe, 1961; *Ivan Mikhajlovič Sečenov*, L., 1968; *Sečenov i mirovaja psikhologičeskaja mysl'*, M., 1981]

A few authors, to be sure, have still maintained traditional views in recent works. [for example: P.T. Belov, *Filosofija vydajuščikhsija russkikh estestvoispitatelej vtoroj poloviny XIX - načala XX v.*, M. 1970, p.166] Nowadays, however, no one can afford to disregard Jaroševskij's conclusions. Even Ostrjanin, who believes that Plekhanov supported Helmholtz's theory of symbols, has not suggested that Helmholtz's influence was direct. Rather, he conceded that Sečenov was the essential mediating influence. [D.F. Ostrjanin, *Bor'ba za materializm i dialektiku v otečestvennom estestvoznanii (Vtoraja polovina XIX - načalo XX v.)*, Kiev, 1981, p.160]

In the meantime, the scholarship about Plekhanov has grown rich with new contributions, and, although these do not directly tackle epistemological problems, they have shed new light on the subject. For instance, at the end of the 1950's, a few intriguing works appeared that raised the problem of the relation between biology and psychology within Plekhanov's ideas on esthetics. [V.V. Vaislov, *Problema prekrasnogo*, M. 1957, pp.49-50; V.G. Astakhov, 'G.V. Plekhanov ob estetičeskom čuvstve', Učenie *zapiski Tadžikskogo Universiteta*, 1959, 19, vyp.3, pp.3-44; P.A. Nikolaev, *Estetika i literaturnye teorii G.V. Plekhanova*, M., 1968] Astakhov, for one, emphasized the influence of Feuerbach's anthropological materialism, both directly and throught Chernyshevsky, on Plekhanov's esthetics, and in particular on his concept of subject. [V.G. Astakhov, *G.V. Plekhanov i N.G. Chernyshevsky*, Stalinabad 1961]

The literature on Plekhanov's esthetics has revealed more clearly the Feuerbachian influence, a point which is often made in Plekhanov's epistemology. Thus, in 1959 Sorokina was still trotting out the usual condemnation of Plekhanov's theory of knowledge, to the effect that "Plekhanov did not underlined the essential difference between Feuerbach's theory of knwoledge and Marx' and Engels'". [N.T. Sorokina, 'V.I. Lenin ob ograničennosti plekhanovskoj kritiki makhizma', in *V.I. Lenin i nekotorye voprosy teorii poznanija*, Gorky, 1959, p.237] A few years later, however, Čagin insisted that Plekhanov was not in error when he acknowledged Feuerbach's undeniable influence on Marx' philosophical evolution. Instead, the error arose when he identified anthropological and dialectical materialism as being one and the same. By linking Feuerbach's and Marx' epistemologies, Plekhanov lost the chance to understand the dialectical character of the latter. [B.A. Čagin, *G.V. Plekhanov i ego rol'*..., pp.167-168] More recently M.B. Zejnalov, in his study on Plekhanov's understanding of Chernyshevsky, emphasized again that Plekhanov, by endorsing Feuerbach's theory of knowledge, disregarded the fact that in Feuerbach's opinion the subject of knowledge is not a social being, as it must be in Marxism. [M.B. Zejnalov, 'N.G. Chernyshevsky v ocenke G.V. Plekhanova', in *Filosofija N.G. Chernyshevskogo i sovremennost'*, M., 1978, p.93]

Besides Feuerbach, Spinoza and the French materialists also have been studied as Plekhanov's philosophical "sources". Although there appeared few serious analysis of Plekhanov's reading of bourgeois philosophers [for example: E.K. Doroševič, *G.V. Plekhanov o francuzskom materializme XVIII veka*, Minsk, 1958], the Soviets very often reckoned Plekhanov's attitude towards Spinoza and French materialists *tout court* in the number of his "mistakes". [see N.T. Sorokina, *Voprosy teorii poznanija*..., p.7] While writing about Plekhanov's polemic against philosophical revisionism, Čagin stated:

> Sometimes he criticized philosophical revisionists not from the position of dialectical materialism, but from the positions of pre-Marxian materialism, appealing to seventeenth and eighteenth centuries materialists' opinions in order to prove the theses of contemporary materialism. [B.A. Čagin, *Bor'ba marksizma-leninizma*..., p.139]

After Plekhanov's rehabilitation it was necessary to account for the presence and character of dialectics in his thought. Plekhanov had always called his materialism "dialectical", but Lenin had explicitly criticized Plekhanov's dialectics. In 1956, when enthusiasm for Plekhanov was spreading, Okulov maintained that, for Plekhanov,

"Marxist dialectics is the sole scientific method of knowing reality", although he acknowledged in Plekhanov at the same time "a few mistakes in his interpretation of dialectical materialism". In his theory of knowledge,

> while defending Marxist views on the knowability of the world, Plekhanov gave a deep dialectical solution of problems such as that of space and time, of the correspondence of relative and objective truth. [A.F. Okulov, 'Bor'ba Plekhanova...', pp.26-28]

More critically, Azarenko remarked that, although Plekhanov helped more than anyone else to spread the dialectical method,

> he did not pay due attention to the law of unity and struggle of opposites, he did not show that this law is the essence of dialectics. Plekhanov thought the uneven development through leaps to be the fundamental trait of dialectics, its essence. [E.Ja. Azarenko, 'Razvitie G.V. Plekhanovym filosofii marksizma', p.165]

Later Čagin deemed Plekhanov's development of dialectical materialism to be his greatest merit. Čagin, however, acknowledged as well that "on the whole dialectics as a philosophical science did not receive its creative development in his work". As for his theory of knowledge, Plekhanov correctly singled out the double character of dialectics as both the objective dynamics of the development of things and the subjective reflection of the contradictions of being. But Plekhanov, according to Čagin, was imprecise in defining the relation between dialectics and formal logic, treating the latter as if it were only a part of the former. [B.A. Čagin, *G.V. Plekhanov i ego rol'...*, pp.76-81]

Refuting this widely shared opinion, Gubajdullin repeatedly stated:

> Dialectics (in Plekhanov's understanding) includes already in itself as a case or aspect of thinking *what* formal logic understands as the *only* contents of thinking. The question is not in an eclectic combination of laws of dialectic and formal logic, but in the dialectical unity of the object and a single aspect of it. [R.Ju. Gubajdullin, 'Obščie pričini razvitija ponjatij v rabotakh G.V. Plekhanova perioda bor'by s narodničestvom', *Sbornik aspirantskikh rabot. Obšč. nauki. Filosofija. Politekonomija*, č. II, Kazan' 1967, p.69; *Metodologičeskie osnovy kritiki G.V. Plekhanovym narodničestva (1883-1895 gg.)*, Avtoreferat, Kazan' 1968, p.13]

In the 1970's and the beginning of the 1980's, theoretical and methodological problems of Plekhanov's epistemology, the subject-object relation, and the role of dialectics, have been repeatedly tackled by O.G. Mazaeva in a few very original and intriguing works. According to Mazaeva, Plekhanov correctly analyzed knowledge within human social activity.

> The relation between subject and object within knowledge and within productive praxis is mediated. In productive praxis the mediating link is the system of means and tools of work, in knowledge different forms of thinking at sensible and rational levels play this role. The mediating link determines the way of connection and the character of the assimilation of the object by the subject. In the process of knowledge it is very difficult to delimit the subject and the means of knowledge on the one hand, and the object on the other, whereas this delimitation more clearly appears in productive praxis.

Plekhanov's hieroglyphic conception is wholly consistent with dialectical materialism, and its specificity has to be seen in its attempts at accounting for the complexity of the suject-object relation. According to Mazaeva, from Plekhanov's arguing in favor of the theory of correspondence against vulgar identification of ideal and real, one can infer

> the correspondence of the isomorphic character of 'forms of consciousness', by which Plekhanov meant the 'laws' of consciousness, its 'structure', with the 'forms of things'. This isomorphic correspondence aims to understand the complexity of cognitive process, which is not a mechanical reflection, a mirror-like identity of ideal and material. [O.G. Mazaeva, 'Kharakteristika soderžanija principa ob"ektivnosti issledovanija social'nykh javlenij v trudakh G.V. Plekhanova (gnoseologičeskij aspekt)', *Voprosy metodologii nauki*, 1973, 3, pp.155; 160]

A few years later, Mazaeva came back to the same subject, and denied again that Plekhanov was wholly 'hieroglyphist':

> in the light of today's solution of the question of the relationship between the sign, as functional substitute of the object, and the meaning, as the contents of sense of this material berear of information, Plekhanov's researches becomes understandable, since he tried to emphasize the complexity of the reciprocal relations of

> subjective and objective within knowledge. This does not mean, of course, that he raised or solved the question of sign and meaning, but there is no doubt that G.V. Plekhanov's arguments reflect the essence of that question, [although] in an undeveloped, intuitive form and even inadequate terminology. [O.G. Mazaeva, *Voprosy sub"ektno-ob"ektnykh otnošenij v trudakh G.V. Plekhanova*, Avtoreferat, Tomsk 1976, p.17]

In Mazaeva's opinion, Plekhanov sought a correct dialectical-materialistic solution of the problem, since he never left the social-historical level. While going further than a metaphysical approach toward 'human nature', Plekhanov correctly pointed out the relation between the biological, psychological and social.

> Human physical organization and biological evolution create the human faculty of thinking, but conceptions, ideas, concepts - all the system of human knowledge - cannot be explained without the only source of their contents: social-historical praxis. The contents of concepts correspond not to the system of biological properties, not to the system of signs, although without them our knowledge would not exist and would be inexpressible, but to the real appearances of (productive, familiar, religious, etc.) reality, during and as a result of which they are created. [O.G. Mazaeva, 'Vzgljady G.V. Plekhanova na prirodu poznanija', in *Zakonomernosti razvitija sovremennoj nauki*, Tomsk 1981, p.217]

In 1983 the interest in Plekhanov witnessed a new revival in connection with the hundredth anniversary of the foundation of the Group of Emancipation of Labour, a celebration that generated many publications, lectures, and debates. [see, for example: 'V čest' znamenitel'noj dati', *Leninskoe znamja*, 28.IX.1983; A.I. Utkin, V.V. Šelokhaev, *Pervaja marksistskaja organizacija Rossii*, M., 1983; *Gruppa "Osvoboždenie truda" i obščestvenno-političeskaja bor'ba v Rossii*, M., 1984; Načalo *rasprostranenija marksizma v Rossii*, M., 1984; *Rasprostranenie marksizma v Rossii i gruppa "Osvoboždenie truda"*, L., 1985]

In honor of the centenary, *Dom Plekhanova* edited a new collection of documents, [*Pervaja marksistskaja organizacija Rossii Gruppa "Osvobozdenie Truda" 1883-1903*, M., 1984] that followed the three volumes of *Filosofskoe nasledie G.V. Plekhanova*, which had come out during the 1970's. [1973-1974] Plekhanov was then exalted, especially in his first period of activity, as an eminent representative and the father of Russian Marxism. Soviet scholars, however, did not

engage themselves in a general reconsideration of Plekhanov's philosophical thought, although in 1983 N.N. Bratko stated:

> Plekhanov's philosophical inheritance has not lost its meaning nowadays. It promotes an understanding of the greatness of K. Marx' and F. Engels' intellectual exploits, of the dialectical-materialistic essence of their theory, helps to struggle through arguments against ideological adversaries of Marxism. [N.N. Bratko, 'Ocenka G.V. Plekhanovym teoreticeskikh istočnikov istoričeskogo materializma', *Filosofskie nauki*, 1983, 5, p.69]

The renewal that has recently enlivened Soviet historiography has not yet led to new interpretations of Plekhanov's thought, perhaps because it remains so close to ideology. Some authors persist in contrasting Plekhanov's 'abstractness' and 'weak understanding of dialectics' to Lenin's rich and mature considerations. [for example: T.I. Molčanova, 'Kritika G.V. Plekhanovym filosofskikh osnov revizionizma E.Bernstein'a', *Vestnik Moskovskogo Universiteta*, serija 7, 1986, 5, p.42] Other scholars see Plekhanov's merits in his critique of idealist conceptions and in his historiography. [V.V. Ivanov, 'K voprosu o tradicijakh marksistskoj kritiki neokantianskoj metodologii istoričeskogo poznanija (o značenii kritiki G.V. Plekhanovym koncepcii idiografizma)', *Metodologičeskie i istoriografičeskie voprosy istoričeskoj nauki*, vyp. 18, Tomsk, 1986, pp.32-40] Others emphasize Plekhanov's insights into the Marxist approach to the problem of criterion of truth, by concluding that he "correctly" considered praxis to be this criterion. [T.I. Ojzerman, 'K voprosu o praktike kak kriterii istiny', *VF*, 1987, 10, p.104] None of those articles, however, makes a substantial methodological contribution. Whatever their evaluation of Plekhanov's thought, Soviet scholars still seem to be more interested in 'evaluating' him, rather than rigorously analyzing his theories.

In the past few months, however, some more interesting trends have appeared in Plekhanov studies, especially in the first cycle of "Lectures on Plekhanov", which took place at *Dom Plekhanova*, on May 30-31, 1988. Although none of the lectures - at least in their published form - dwelled on epistemological problems, it is worth taking into consideration a few of the characteristics that are common to several different contributions, in order to show some interesting changes in Soviet Plekhanov studies.

Many scholars are now quite critical of the earlier historiography, and they draw a sharp distinction between the times of 'canonization' and those of condemnation. [in particular: T.A. Filimonova, T.A.

Arkušenko, 'Aktual'nye problemy...', pp.33-36; S.M. Brajovič, 'Filosofija i politika u G.V. Plekhanova', in *Plekhanovskie čtenija*, pp.12-14; A.N. Camutali, '«Istorija russkoj obščestvennoj mysli» G.V. Plekhanova i ee mesto v russkoj istoriografii načala XX veka', *ibid.* pp.15-17] In addition, Plekhanov's thought is now being considered more broadly within the context of Second-International Marxism. [for example: M.V. Konkin, 'G.V. Plekhanov - pervyj istorik marksizma kak celostnogo učenija', *ibid.* pp.6-9] In their common lecture, Filimonova and Arkušenko, the Director and research associate of *Dom Plekhanova*, respectively, insisted on the need for Soviet historians to get rid of stereotypes, and went so far as to criticize the traditional opposition of Plekhanov and Lenin "in all the questions of philosophy and politics". In order to study Plekhanov seriously one should forget the commonplaces that for a long time considered him essentially and above all as the leader of Menshevism. [T.A. Filimonova, T.A. Arkušenko, *op.cit.*, p.28]

Nowadays, in accordance with the new principles which are spreading in Soviet political and cultural context, historians of philosophy seem to acknowledge the necessity of analyzing historical reality before evaluating it. According to V.A. Malinin:

> The chances of a critical and objective evaluation depend both on correctly supplied and increasing information, and on more and more profound and unprejudiced studying of objective trends, including confrontation of opinions. [V.A. Malinin, 'Istorija obščestvennoj mysli kak kompleksnoe znanie', *ibid.* p.5]

This aim might become a common ground for new exchanges between Soviet and Western historians. Moreover, the long wished for (and hopefully forthcoming) critical edition of Plekhanov's collected works would be a very helpful tool for all of Plekhanov's students in order seriously and rigorously to deal with Plekhanov's thought in its historical context.

Turin, June 1988.

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Bibl.	Biblioteka
Č.	Čast'
Gos.	Gosudarstvennyj/aja
In-t	Institut
Iz.	Izdanie
Izd.-vo	Izdatel'stvo
Kaf.	Kafedra
Kn.	Kniga
L.	Leningrad
Med.	Medicinskij
M.	Moskva
Obšč.	Obščestvennyj
Pg.	Pietrograd
PSS	*Polnoe sobranie šocinenij*
Pub.	Publičnyj/aja
PZM	*Pod Znamenem Marksizma*
Sb.	Sbornik
SPb	Saint Petersburg
T.	Tom
VF	*Voprosy Filosofii*
VFP	*Voprosy Filosofii i Psikhologii*
VKA	*Vestnik Kommunističeskoj Akademii*
Vyp.	Vypusk

In particular, the following abbreviations have been used as regards Plekhanov's works and unpublished materials:

ADP Gos. Pub. Bibl. im. M.E. Saltykova-Ščedrina, Archiv *Doma Plekhanova*

BDP Gos. Pub. Bibl. im. M.E. Saltykova-Ščedrina, Biblioteka *Doma Plekhanova*

FNP *Filosofsko-literaturnoe nasledie G.V. Plekhanova* [Plekhanov's Literary-Philosophical Legacy], eds. M.T.

Iovčuk, I.N. Kurbatova, B.A. Čagin, M. 1973-1974, 3 vv.

GOT *Sborniki Gruppy "Osvoboždenie Truda"* [Collected Documents of the Group for the "Emancipation of Labour"], ed. L.G. Deutsch, with the assistence of L.I. Aksel'rod, R.M. Bograd-Plekhanova, S.Ja. Vol'fson, E.M. Zinov'eva-Deutsch and I.N. Kubikova, M.-L. 1924-1928, 6 vv.

IFP *Izbrannye Filosofskie Proizvedenija*[Selected Philosophical Works], eds. M.T. Iovčuk, A.I. Maslin, P.N. Fedoseev, V.A. Fomina, B.A. Čagin; E.S. Koc, I.S. Belen'kij, S.M. Firsanova, B.L. Jakobson, M. 1956-1958, 5 vv.

LE *Literatura i Estetika* [Literature and Esthetics],ed. B.I. Bursov, M., 1958, 2 vv.

LNP *Literaturnoe nasledie G.V. Plekhanova* [Plekhanov's Literary Legacy], eds. P.F. Judin, M.T. Iovčuk, I.D. Udal'cov, R.M. Plekhanova, M. 1934-1940, 8 vv.

PMO *Pervaja marksistskaja organizacija Rossii - Gruppa "Osvoboždenie Truda" 1883-1903* [The First Marxist Organization in Russia - The "Emancipation of Labour" Group], eds. M.T. Iovčuk, B.A. Čagin, S.S. Vol, I.N. Kurbatova, M. 1984.

PPA *Perepiska G.V. Plekhanova i P.B. Aksel'roda* [Correspondence between G.V. Plekhanov and P.B. Aksel'rod], eds. P.A. Berlin, V.S. Vojtinskij, B.I. Nikolaevskij, M. 1925, 2 vv.

Soč. *Sočinenija* [Works], ed. D. Rjazanov, M.-Pg. 1923-1927, 24 vv.

A. CHRONOLOGICAL INDEX OF PLEKHANOV'S QUOTED WORKS AND LETTERS

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1883 *Obizdanii "Biblioteki Sovremennogo Socializma"* [On the Publication of the "Library of Contemporary Socialism"],

Geneva; *Soč.* t.II, pp.21-23.
1884 *Naši raznoglasija* [Our Differences], Geneva, gruppa "Osvoboždenie Truda"; *IFP* t.I, pp.115-370.
1889 *Novyj zaščitnik samoderžavija, ili gore g. Tichomirova* [A New Defender of Autocracy, or the Grief of Mr. Tichomirov], Geneva, "Russk. soc.-dem. sojuz"; *IFP* t.I, pp.382-417.
1890 'N.G. Chernyshevsky', *Social-demokrat*, 1, pp.88-175; *IFP* t.IV, pp.70-167.
1891 'Zu Hegels sechzigsten Todestag', *Die Neue Zeit*, Jg.X, Bd.I, pp.198-203; 236-243; 273-282; [K šestidesjatoj godovščine smerti Gegelja] *IFP* t.I, pp.442-450.
1892 [Predislovie k pervomu izdaniju ("Ot perevodčika") i primečanija Plekhanova k knige F. Engels'a: *Ludwig Feuerbach i konec klassičeskoj nemeckoj filosofii]* [Preface to the first edition - "From the Translator" - and Plekhanov's notes in *Ludwig Feuerbach und der Ausgang der klassischen deutschen Philosophie* by Engels], in F. Engels, *Ludwig Feuerbach*, Geneva, pp.I-II, 73-105; *IFP* t.I, pp.451-503.
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